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ARABIC BOOKS AND LIBRARIES IN THE UMAIYAD PERIOD

RUTH STELLHORN MACKENSEN

With the murder of ʿAlī, the fourth caliph, and the establishment of the Umayyads at Damascus, the capital of Islam moved into a country which had been predominantly Christian for centuries. This fact was to have an influence both in the development of life and religion at the court and in the homeland. Despite prejudices against the Umayyads on the part of many of the devout, Medina was not cut off entirely from the political capital. Some would have no dealings with the caliphs of Damascus, whom they regarded as godless impostors, and accordingly the interests and studies of this party had a backward look. Others, however, accepted the Umayyads as the legitimate heads of Islam, asking only that the rulers pay outward homage to the religion of the Prophet; this group was willing to serve them. An intermediate position held it to be the duty of every Moslem to support the head of the state, however unworthy he might be, for the unity of Islam must be preserved at all costs.¹ Hence scholars and poets passed back and forth between the Hijāz and Syria, to some extent bridging the gap between the uncompromising position of the devout of Medina and the freer ways and outlook of those attached to the court at Damascus.

It is exceedingly difficult to deal justly with the Umayyads, for most of the extant Arabic literature comes from a day when their names were anathema. The Abbasids not only sought to exterminate every surviving member of the previous dynasty but were determined to destroy their very memory. When that was impossible they were portrayed in a most unfavorable light. Their inscriptions were defaced, and those who dared to speak a word in their praise were subject to persecution. The scheme succeeded all too well, for it is impossible to write anything approaching an adequate history of the Umayyad period. Except for ʿUmar II (caliph from 99–101/717–20),

¹ A. Guillaume, *The Traditions of Islam* (Oxford, 1924), pp. 44 ff.

Arabic writers have seen little to praise in the personal lives of these caliphs. Their military and political achievements are acknowledged, for they left obvious results which are to the glory of Islam, but in general the Umayyads are represented as irreligious, loose-living, and uncultivated. Poets flourished at their courts, but otherwise the arts and learning languished. On the whole, Islam has accepted this picture of the dark days preceding the glorious era of the early Abbasids.

Shiites have agreed with the orthodox estimate of the Umayyads, or rather gone one better, for they look upon ʿAlī as the first scholar of Islam and on his brief caliphate as witnessing the beginning of true Moslem learning. Hence a modern Moslem writer, the late Amīr ʿAlī, who spoke of the fourth caliph as the "beloved disciple" and the "scholar," referred to the accession of the Umayyads as a "blow to the progress of knowledge and liberalism."²

To the orthodox as well as to many Occidentals, Moslem learning and the arts of civilization begin with the Abbasids. But recently there has been some tendency to discount the prejudices of most Arabic authors and to give attention to any fragmentary evidence which presents the Umayyads in a more favorable light. Fortunately, not all Arabic writers fell in line with the official policy. Aḥmad ibn Hanbal, founder of one of the four great schools of Moslem law, impartially reported traditions favorable to the claims of the Umayyads and the house of ʿAlī as well as to the Abbasids. However, except for slight traces, the Syrian tradition is lost to us. Wellhausen held that the best acquaintance with the spirit of the Syrian tradition was to be gained from Christian chronicles, particularly the *Continuatio* of Isidor of Seville, where the Umayyads appear in a very different and more favorable light than that in which they are customarily presented.³ Furthermore, the anecdotal character of much Arabic writing and the tendency to quote earlier authors extensively have preserved fragmentary evidence which often contradicts the general point of view.

On the literary side the Umayyad period, except for a widespread love of poetry, is poor compared to the one which followed. Neverthe-

² *Spirit of Islam* (rev.; London, 1922), p. 363.

³ J. Wellhausen, *The Arab Kingdom and Its Fall*, trans. M. G. Weir (Calcutta, 1927), pp. xiv f.

less, it was not as utterly barren as would appear both from the small number of works which have survived and from the remarks of historians. The lack of literary remains from the early days of Islam is to be accounted for in part by the prevalent use of papyrus following the conquest of Egypt. Climatic conditions in Syria, Iraq, and Persia are not conducive to the preservation of that fragile material, and the earliest Arabic papyri from Egypt are chiefly documents, private letters, and accounts.⁴ Becker says that the earliest book manuscript which survives is a twenty-seven-page papyrus book dated 229/844. It is interesting that this is in codex rather than roll form.⁵ At any time, of course, earlier material may be found, for literary papyri have not yet received as much attention as non-literary. It is difficult, however, to account for the imposing lists of authors from the end of the second century on, unless one supposes modest beginnings in preceding years.

One must use allusions to early authorities with caution, for it is often difficult to distinguish between quotations of oral traditions and those taken from books. It is very likely, however, that some were taken from written sources. I believe there is sufficient evidence for the existence, in Umayyad times, both of the beginnings of a prose literature and of an interest in books and book-collecting.

First of all, what precisely is meant by a book at this time? According to all reports, Zaid's first edition of the Koran consisted of leaves (*ṣaḥīfa*; pl. *ṣuḥuf*) kept together in some fashion, which were intrusted to the safekeeping of Ḥafṣa, ʿUmar I's daughter. It is uncertain how precise the order was in which they were kept, for at the time of the preparation of the ʿUthmānic Koran there was some disagreement on the arrangement of the *sūra*'s. After that the order was fixed. Both *ṣaḥīfa* and the more common word for book (*kitāb*; pl. *kutub*) refer primarily to pieces of paper, skin, or other materials on which are or may be writing. The terms often refer merely to loose sheets, documents, or letters, but they may also apply to books in the ordinary sense of the word. The Koran was considered a book, the record of separate revelations which are united by common authorship and ultimate purpose. Mohammed himself was aware of the

⁴ D. S. Margoliouth, *Catalogue of Arabic Papyri in the John Rylands Library, Manchester* (Manchester, 1933), p. xiv.

⁵ C. H. Becker, *Papyri Schott-Reinhardt* (Heidelberg, 1906), I, 8 f., MS P.S.R. 22-49.

existence of books. The last verse of *sūra* 87 refers to the books (*ṣuḥuf*) of Abraham and Moses, and any religious group possessed of sacred books was called the people of Scripture, or "book-people" (*ahl al-kitāb*).

Accordingly it is often impossible to tell whether *ṣuḥuf* and *kutub* are to be understood as books or merely as loose sheets or pages of writing. For example, suppose for the moment the historicity of a tradition to the effect that Anas ibn Mālik (d. 92 A.H.) handed his students writings (*kutub*), containing sayings of the Prophet. Did he have formally published books, or merely loose leaves of notes? Probably the latter. The great canonical compilations of traditions, prepared in the Abbasid period, appear to have been preceded by informal private collections for the use of scholars and their disciples. These are more akin to the notes of a lecturer or the notebooks of his students than to books, as the term is usually understood. But they indicate an appreciation of the value of written records and the tendency to fix oral tradition in a permanent form. According to a report, which occurs in but one version of the *Muwattaʿ* of Mālik ibn Anas, the Umayyad caliph ʿUmar II feared that valuable traditions might be lost and ordered one who had known the prophet to gather and commit them to writing. Guillaume and others doubt the trustworthiness of the report on the ground that none of the later writers on tradition refers to such a compilation, and the occurrence of the report in but one version of the *Muwattaʿ*.⁶

There are many reports of learned men in the early days of Islam who committed their collections of traditions to writing, often merely for their own use. Some, having memorized them, destroyed them or ordered this to be done after their death. Years ago Sprenger collected a number of such anecdotes, some of which are probably apocryphal, but in general they represent a prevalent custom. Al-Ḥasan

⁶ Guillaume, *op. cit.*, p. 19; al-Shaibani's version of the *Muwattaʿ*, p. 389; see Sprenger, "Origin and Progress of Writing Down Historical Facts," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, XXV (1856), 303 ff. and cont. 375 ff.; Khuda Bukhsh's translation of von Kremer's *Kultur-Geschichte des Orients*, under the title of *The Orient under the Caliphs* (Calcutta, 1920), pp. 373 ff.; I. Goldziher, *Mohammedanische Studien* (Halle, 1888-90), II, 210. Horowitz, on the other hand, apparently accepted this as authentic; see "The Earliest Biographies of the Prophet and Their Authors," *Islamic Culture*, January, 1928, pp. 24 f., citing Ibn Sa'd, *Biographien Muhammads, etc.* (Leyden, 1905-28), IIb, 134, and Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bari bi Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhari* (Cairo, 1901-11), XII, 39, as saying that Abū Bakr ibn Mohammed ibn ʿAmr, judge at Medina (d. ca. 120), was so requested by ʿUmar II. If such a book was written, it was short-lived, for, when asked concerning it, Abū Bakr's son ʿAbd Allāh admitted it was lost (Ibn Hajar, *ibid.*).

of Baṣra (d. 110/728) had a great mass of notes which he directed to be burned after his death, and he was accused of passing off as oral traditions information which he had really drawn from books.⁷ Mūsā ibn ʿUḳba said that a client of Ibn ʿAbbās, Kuraib (d. 98 A.H.), possessed a camel-load of the writings (*kutub*; again probably the notes) of Ibn ʿAbbās (d. 68), a companion of the Prophet. Whenever his grandson ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd Allāh (d. 113) wished to refer to any of them, he wrote for such-and-such a page (*ṣaḥīfa*) to the owner, who would send him a copy.⁸ Kuraib left these *books* to Ibn ʿUḳba, and both he and ʿIkrima utilized them. There are numerous references to students who wrote down the words of their teachers on pages, rolls, tablets, or even on their shoes. Saʿīd ibn Jubair (d. 95 A.H.) is reported to have said, "In the lectures of Ibn ʿAbbās, I used to write on my page [or roll: *ṣaḥīfa*]; when it was filled, I wrote on the upper leather of my shoes, and then on my hand." Of the same student it is said that he used to write on his shoes, literally feet, and the next morning copied his notes.⁹ Two other sayings seem to indicate that such books or notes had market value. "My father wrote to me when I was at Kūfa, 'Buy books [*kutub*] and write down knowledge, for wealth is transitory, but knowledge is lasting'"; and another: "My father used to say to me, 'Learn by heart, but attend above all to writing, when you come home [probably from lectures] write, and if you fall into need or your memory fails you, you have your books.'"¹⁰

Ibn Khallikān's remarks on Abū ʿAmr ibn al-ʿAlāʾ (d. 154/770) are suggestive as to the nature of books collected by early scholars.

The books [*kutub*] containing the expressions he had written down from the lips of the purest speakers among the Arabs of the desert nearly filled one of his rooms [or his house] up to the ceiling, but when he took to reading [the Koran], that is, when he commenced the practice of devotion, he threw them away; and when he returned to the study of his old science, he possessed nothing of it except what he had learned by heart.¹¹

⁷ De Goeje, art. "Tabari and Early Arabic Historians," *Encyc. Brit.* (9th ed.), p. 2.

⁸ Sprenger, "Origin and Progress, etc.," *op. cit.*, p. 325; and *Das Leben und die Lehre des Mohammed* (Berlin, 1861-65), I, xciv; Horovitz, *op. cit.*, p. 167; Ibn Saʿd, V, 216 (quoting Ibn ʿUḳba).

⁹ Sprenger, "Origin and Progress, etc.," *op. cit.*, p. 321.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 324. These sayings may be genuine, although they smack of controversy.

¹¹ *Biographical Dictionary*, trans. De Slane (Paris, 1843), I 400 = Arabic text (Cairo, 1310 A.H.), I, 387. Margoliouth's remarks in *Lectures on Arabian Historians* (Calcutta, 1930), p. 97, on Abū ʿAun ibn al-ʿAṭaʾ, sound like a confusion of names, for the dates and details are the same.

Abū ʿAmr was a philologist and Koran reader, but it is probable that the books (*kutub* or *ṣuḥuf*) of traditionalists were similar collections of notes they had taken down.

As late as 400 A.H. an eccentric scholar of Bagdad, Abū Ḥaiyān al-Ṭawḥīdī, destroyed his books, and, being reproved by the judge Abū Sahl ʿAlī ibn Mohammed, wrote a letter of apology which Yāqūt preserves in full. He defends his act by citing the example of men of the past who had done likewise. He says Abū ʿAmr and Dāūd al-Ṭāʾī burned their books, Tāj al-Amma flung his into the sea, Yūsuf ibn Asbāṭ hid his books in a cavern in the mountains (the entrance to which he blocked), Sulaimān-al-Dārānī put his into an earthen oven and baked them, Sufyān tore up a tremendous number of pages and tossed them to the wind, and, finally, Abū Ḥaiyān's own teacher, Abū Saʿīd al-Sīrāfī, bequeathed books to his son, with the stipulation that they be burned "if they betray you."¹²

Although it appears that such notes and books were intended merely for the private use of their owners, some crystallized into more formal books and were in a sense published either by repeated dictation to students who thereby multiplied copies or by permitting them to be read and copied. These methods of publication of manuscript books continued in Islam, being augmented later by the custom of having copies multiplied by professional scribes. Many who could not afford the services of a copyist borrowed books or used copies in libraries and made copies for their own use.

We shall never know the extent of the publication of formal works on traditions produced in pre-Abbasid days: only one such work has survived, a small collection known as the *Book of Asceticism* (*Kitāb al-Zuhd*) by Asad ibn Mūsā (d. 133/749).¹³ It is curious that although no work on tradition from the pen of Mohammed ibn Sīrīn (d. 110/728), an authority on the subject, has remained, his work on divination of dreams (*Kitāb al-Ghawāmiʿ*) is still extant.¹⁴

Traditions of a distinctly Shiite complexion were circulating and perhaps had begun to be gathered in this period, although the canonical Shiite texts came into being even later than the orthodox. ʿAlī

¹² Yāqūt, *Biographical Dictionary* ("Gibbs Series" [Leyden, 1907-27]), V, 389.

¹³ This work is not yet published (Berlin MS 1553). See Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Literatur* (Weimar, 1898, 1902), I, 66; Nicholson, *A Literary History of the Arabs* (London, 1907), p. 247.

¹⁴ Brockelmann (*op. cit.*) mentions another work by Ibn Sīrīn. On his reputation as a legalist and interpreter of dreams see Ibn Khallikān (De S.), II, 586 ff.

is frequently spoken of as "the scholar of God in this [Moslem] community,"¹⁵ and he is said to have been one of the few of the Kuraish who could write in the earliest days of Islam. The Prophet is reported to have declared that "if all the learning of the Arabs were destroyed it might be found again in 'Alī as in a living library."¹⁶ There are traditions to the effect that 'Alī had a special copy of the Koran on which were marginal notes of his own, preserving explanations he had received from Mohammed in conversation. This has grown in Shiite tradition to a mysterious book, the *Jafr*. But al-Bukhari and others say that 'Alī disclaimed having a special book, rather that the writings consisted merely of simple regulations for the community. "In it are instructions about the wounded, what to do with the older camels, and the extent of the sacred territory about Medina."¹⁷

It is not improbable that 'Alī had a written record of some instructions given him personally by the Prophet. However, its growth into a document "seventy cubits long as measured by the arm of the Prophet," containing everything "permitted and forbidden" and "everything necessary for mankind," "the knowledge of the prophets and the reports of the prophets and the scholars of the Beni Israel," is typical of the tendencies of traditional literature.¹⁸ The same Shiite writer who describes the *Jafr* in such glowing terms reports that before his death 'Alī gave the sacred books and his armor to his son Ḥasan with regulations as to their subsequent disposal.¹⁹

Popular story-tellers and poets who sympathized with the house of 'Alī made so much of the tragedy of Kerbela and other episodes in the history of the blessed family that the caliphs of Damascus were forced to deal with them, either courting their favor and thereby rendering them harmless or, when this failed, silencing them by imprisonment or death. Apparently Shiite tradition had become sufficiently widespread and dangerous to call for official censorship. Al-

¹⁵ D. M. Donaldson, *The Shi'ite Religion* (London, 1933), p. 46, from al-Ḥasan of Baṣra as preserved by al-Kāfi, *Kitāb al-Amālī* (Bulaḡ, 1324/1906), III, 173 and 198.

¹⁶ L. Twells, *Life of Dr. Edward Pococke*, Preface to *Theological Works of the Learned Dr. Pococke* (London, 1740), I, 9.

¹⁷ Al-Bukhari, *Ṣaḥīḥ* (Leyden, 1862-68, 1908), II, chap. lviii, §§ 10 and 17; Donaldson, *op. cit.*, pp. 47 f. The author of the *Fihrist* (written 987 A.D., see pp. 40-41) says he saw autographs of 'Alī and other of Mohammed's scribes, and of 'Alī's sons, Ḥasan and Ḥusain in the library of a devout Shiite bibliophile.

¹⁸ Al-Kulainī (d. 328 or 329/939) *Kāfi fi 'Ilm al-Dīn* (Teheran, 1889), p. 85, as translated by Donaldson, *op. cit.*, p. 48; see the following pages for other elaborate descriptions of the supposed writings of 'Alī; also art. "Djafr," by Macdonald, in *Encyc. Islam*.

¹⁹ Al-Kulainī, *op. cit.*, p. 110; Donaldson, *op. cit.*, pp. 67 f.

Ṭabarī says that Muʿāwīya ordered the suppression of all traditions favorable to the house of ʿAlī to be replaced by declarations of the glory of the family of ʿUthmān, the third caliph and ʿAlī's predecessor.²⁰ This would indicate that the caliphs recognized the value of traditions for propaganda purposes. It also falls in line with other indications that a body of distinctly Umayyad traditions once existed. Remnants of the Syrian tradition are to be found especially in statements which emphasize the sanctity of Jerusalem as a place of pilgrimage at least equal to Mecca and Medina.²¹ Al-Zuhrī, of whom more will be said presently, is reported to have confessed "these princes [the Umayyads] have compelled us to write *ḥadīth*,"²² and there is every reason to suppose that he was among those who felt no scruples against serving the "godless caliphs."²³

A most interesting character who flourished under the Umayyads was the learned lawyer and traditionalist, al-ʿAʿmash abū Mohammed Sulaimān ibn Mihrān, who was born in 60 or 61/680 and died in 148/765. The caliph of the time, Hishām ibn ʿAbd Allāh, wrote a letter to him requiring that he compose a book²⁴ on the virtues of ʿUthmān and the crimes of ʿAlī. Al-ʿAʿmash, after reading the note, thrust it into the mouth of a sheep, which ate it up, and said to the messenger, "Tell him I answer it thus." The latter, terrified because he had been told that his life would be forfeited if he returned without a written answer, solicited the aid of the friends of al-ʿAʿmash, who finally prevailed on him to send a written reply, which was couched in the following terms: "In the name of God, the Merciful, the Clement! Commander of the Faithful! Had ʿUthmān possessed all the virtues in the world they had been of no utility to you; and if ʿAlī committed all the crimes of which the human race is guilty, they had done you no injury. Mind the qualities of your own little self, and adieu!" Ibn Khallikān's sketch of this man bespeaks a vigorous and refreshing personality in whom the independent spirit of the desert Arab was still alive, possessed of a salty wit and a sharp tongue,

²⁰ Al-Ṭabarī, *Annales*, ed. De Goeje (Leyden, 1879-1901), II, 112; Guillaume, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

²¹ Guillaume, *loc. cit.*

²² *Ibid.*, p. 50; Muir, *Life of Mahomet* (ed. 1861), I, xxxiii, as from Ibn Saʿd, II, 135.

²³ Cl. Huart, *History of Arabic Literature* (New York, 1903), pp. 61 f.; Nicholson, *op. cit.*, p. 247.

²⁴ So trans. by De Slane, Ibn Khallikān, I, 588 = Arabic text (Cairo ed.), I, 213, lit.: "Write for me the virtues." The letter devoured by the sheep was on papyrus (*qirṭās*).

a lack of awe for position and authority, and a sense of justice. The caliph apparently appreciated this exhibition of the ancient virtues which the Umayyads admired, for there is no mention that he punished the audacity of al-ʿAʿmash. One may perhaps be pardoned a digression to recount two other anecdotes concerning this interesting character. Some students went to him one day to learn traditions. Greeting them, he announced, "Were there not in the house a person [meaning his wife] whom I detest more than I do you, I should not have come out to you." On another occasion a man followed him as he took a walk and saw him enter a cemetery and lie down in a newly dug grave. As he came out he shook the earth from his head and exclaimed, "Oh, how narrow the dwelling!"²⁵

Among the devout there seems to have been a quite sincere feeling that the desire to write books was based on sinful pride, and they sought to avoid the appearance of producing anything which might detract from the unique position of the Koran. This applied to the writing of traditions more than to any other type of literature, probably owing in part to the fact that traditions contained words of the Prophet, which might easily be regarded as of equal interest and authority with those of the sacred book. This attitude continued far down in the history of Moslem literature.

As late as the middle of the fifth century after the Hijra a learned Shāfiʿite doctor of Bagdad, al-Māwardī (d. 450/1058), refused to publish any of his works, which, however, he kept together in a safe place. As death approached he said to his confidant:

The books in such a place were composed by me, but I abstained from publishing them because I suspected that, although my intention in writing them was to work in God's service, that feeling, instead of being pure, was sullied by baser motives. Therefore when you perceive me on the point of death and falling into agony, take my hand in yours, and if I press it, you will know thereby that none of these works have been accepted by me; in this case you must take them all and throw them by night into the Tigris, but if I open my hand and close it not, that is the sign of their having been accepted and that my hope in the admission of my intention as sincere and pure has been fulfilled. "When al-Māwardī's death drew near," said the person, "I took him by the hand and he opened it without closing it on mine, whence I knew his labors had been accepted and I then published his works."²⁶

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*, II, 225.



Arabic Books and Libraries in the Umayyad Period (Continued)

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ARABIC BOOKS AND LIBRARIES IN THE UMAIYAD PERIOD—*Continued*

RUTH STELLHORN MACKENSEN

Moslem traditions are valuable not only in themselves, but also because they are the roots from which grew the more important legal, historical, and biographical studies and literature. However formless and temporary the written collections of traditions remained in the Umayyad period, there was a real beginning in the writing of books on these allied subjects. The celebrated handbook for lawyers, the *Muwattaʿ*, of Mālik ibn Anas, a jurist of Medina (d. 179/759–6), was preceded by similar works, none of which has survived, for instance, by Mohammed ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-ʿĀmirī (d. 120/737), Saʿīd ibn Abī ʿArūba (d. 156/773), and ʿAbd al-Mālik ibn Juraij (d. 150/767). The first of them, al-ʿĀmirī, was, like Mālik ibn Anas, a pupil of al-Zuhri, and his work, which bore the same title, *Al-Muwattaʿ*, was considered by some Arabic critics as superior to the later one which has survived.²⁷ Although this type of book incidentally preserves traditions, that is not its primary purpose, which is rather to establish a system of law based on the customary procedure of Medina. Although Mālik's book was written in the early days of the Abbasids, it is the fruit of earlier legal studies and practice, and furnishes some evidence of the activities during the Umayyad period. We see in the writings of Mālik and his predecessors the rise of Moslem canon law, which is a long step from the mere recounting and collecting of tradition.²⁸

Another legal compendium which purports to come from this period is that attributed to Zaid ibn ʿAlī (d. about 122/740), an ʿAlid who led an unsuccessful revolt against the caliphs of Damascus. Although there is evidence that Zaid possessed some learning, it is exceedingly doubtful if this work and others also bearing his name are actually

²⁷ Brockelmann, *op. cit.*, I, 65 f.; Goldziher, *op. cit.*, II, 220; Guillaume, *op. cit.*, pp. 19 f.

²⁸ *Encyc. Islam*, art. "Mālik ibn Anas"; Guillaume, *op. cit.*, pp. 20 ff.; D. B. Macdonald, *Development of Muslim Theology, Jurisprudence, and Constitutional Theory* (New York, 1903), pp. 99–103.

from his hand, at least in their present form. It is more likely that they were fathered on him by the sect which bears his name—the *Zaidīya*—and which regards him as one of the martyrs of the Prophet's family.²⁹

Moslem traditions consist of unconnected anecdotes purporting to record the words and deeds of the Prophet and events of the early days of Islam. Moslem history arose with the first attempts to put these sources into a more connected narrative form. This takes the shape of biographies of the Prophet and accounts of his military exploits. Hence we have two types of literature dealing with Mohammed's life and work—the biography (*sīra*), and the records of conquest (*maghāzī*). The oldest biography which survives is that of Ibn Ishāq (d. 150/768), in the recension of Ibn Hishām (d. 833 A.D.), and the earliest example of *maghāzī* literature is the *Book of the Wars*, by al-Wākidī (d. 822 A.D.). Both were written under the first Abbasids. Behind them lay earlier and perhaps cruder works of similar types.

ʿUrwa ibn al-Zubair (d. about 94/712–13) was the first so to utilize traditions. He was unusually well situated to gather traditions, for both of his parents were early converts. His paternal grandfather was a brother of Khadija, Mohammed's first wife and his maternal aunt, ʿĀ'isha, was the Prophet's favorite wife. ʿUrwa made good use of his opportunities, and recited numerous traditions on their authority, although it is probable that the inclusion of his name in the genealogies of many traditions purporting to come from ʿĀ'isha is spurious. He took little part in the political and military escapades of his brother, ʿAbd Allāh, but lived in studious retirement at Medina, broken only by visits to Egypt and the Umayyad court at Damascus. ʿUrwa is considered one of the seven outstanding divines of Medina and is frequently quoted as a most reliable authority. Hājjī Khalīfa credits him with having written a biography of the Prophet.³⁰ Of such a work nothing else is known, and it is more likely that the quotations from him in the writings of Ibn Ishāq, al-Wākidī, Ibn Saʿd, al-Balādhurī, al-

²⁹ Macdonald, *op. cit.*, pp. 36 f.; *Encyc. Islam*, art. "Zaid Ibn ʿAlī."

³⁰ *Kashf al-Zunūm* (Leipzig and London, 1835–58), V, 646, § 12464; others say a *maghāzī* work. Horovitz credits Abān, son of ʿUthmān, the third caliph, with having been the first to put into writing a special collection dealing with *maghāzī*; of his writing nothing has survived. See "The Earliest Biographies of the Prophet and Their Authors," *Islamic Culture*, October, 1927, p. 539.

Ṭabarī, al-Bukharī, and others are either from oral traditions or the brief tractates which are the characteristic form of his writing. Unfortunately at one time in his life ḌUrwa was influenced by the current prejudice against books other than the Koran and destroyed his writings. His son, Hishām, stated that in 63 A.H. he burned his books of law (*kutub fiḥh*) and subsequently regretted their loss,³¹ for he said his books would have been useful to his children. Whether he rewrote them is uncertain, but he took pains to teach traditions to his children and pupils.³²

There is evidence that with ḌUrwa we have a genuine beginning of Arabic prose literature. Al-Ṭabarī, in his great history, preserves several fragments of ḌUrwa's writings in the form of little treatises written to elucidate various points on early Moslem history in response to inquiries made by the caliph ḌAbd al-Malik,³³ and in one case also by al-Walid.³⁴ All of them are preserved on the authority of ḌUrwa's son, Hishām. One of these is prefaced by the remark, "Thou hast written to me concerning Abū Sufyān and his sortie, and askest me how he then conducted himself."³⁵ Horovitz has shown that the fragments addressed to ḌAbd al-Malik connect and are pieces of the same dissertation.³⁶ Another answer preserved by al-Zuhri, his pupil, was addressed to Ibn Abī Hunaida, who lived at the court of al-Walid.³⁷ It is apparent that these brief expositions, of which there were doubtless others, preceded the writing of longer and more formal books. As has been observed before, the word "books" must be interpreted with caution, and it may be that the only writings of ḌUrwa were of this sort—short tracts of a page or two each, with little or no effort to connect them. As Caetani has pointed out, although they are mere fragments, the style of which is awkward, they are of great significance

³¹ Ibn Sa'd, V, 113; al-Dhahabī, *Tahdibih*, ed. by Fischer as *Biographien von Gewährsmännern*, etc. (Leyden, 1890), p. 41.

³² Sprenger, "Von Kremer's Edition of Wāḳidī," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 1856, p. 208, as from al-Khatīb al-Baghdādī.

³³ Al-Ṭabarī, I, 1180, 1224, 1234, 1284, 1634; probably also 1654, 1636, 1670, 1770.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, III, 2458.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, I, 1284, trans. Horovitz, *op. cit.*, p. 549; for a translation of several of the longer sections see Sprenger, *Das Leben*, etc., I, 356; II, 42; III, 142 ff. For a discussion of ḌUrwa's significance see *ibid.*, pp. lxii f., and Horovitz's excellent and detailed sketch, *op. cit.*, pp. 542–52; Wüstenfeld, *Die Familie el-Zubeir* (Göttingen, 1878), pp. 51–56.

³⁶ Horovitz, *op. cit.*, pp. 548 f.

³⁷ Ibn Hishām, p. 754; al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, XXVIII, 42; see Horovitz, *op. cit.*, pp. 549 f.

in the development of historical writing.³⁸ A characteristic of ʿUrwa's style is the inclusion of bits of poetry of which he is said to have known a great deal.³⁹ Ibn Ishāq, later, was also fond of quoting verses.

The remark of V. Vacca in his article on ʿUrwa in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, "He had collected an *important library* bearing upon many subjects both historical and juridical," is somewhat misleading unless one is reminded that this collection probably consisted of notes taken down by himself and perhaps by others. The same may be said of Sachau's reference to the books ʿUrwa possessed.⁴⁰ It seems very likely that ʿUrwa at times used documents; for instance, he quotes from Mohammed's letter written to the people of Hajar.⁴¹ Sprenger's remarks on the library of the historian al-Wāḳidī (d. 207/823) apply as well to the libraries of ʿUrwa and other early historians:

Al-Wāḳidī's patron spent some 2,000 dinars on books for him, and in addition the historian kept two slaves busy copying others for him, and thereby amassed 600 chests of books, each of which was so heavy that it required two men to carry it. It is evident from his "Book of the Wars" that al-Wāḳidī had gathered thousands of traditions, often the same one in several versions. These he sifted and arranged to make a fairly continuous narrative. There is no reason to doubt that he had some real books, but most of his material consisted of lecture notes [*Kollegien Hefte*] taken down by numerous students.⁴²

We are also told that ʿUrwa's pupil, al-Zuhri (d. 124/742), owned many books (*kutub*) which filled his house; the study of them so occupied all his time that his wife complained, "By Allāh! These books [*kutub*] annoy me more than three other wives would [if you had them]."⁴³ At one time he shared the general disapproval of writing but later saw that its use was not incompatible with piety—in fact, his friends jested about his habit of writing down everything he heard. At first his notes were merely for his own convenience, for

³⁸ *Annali dell' Islām* (Milan, 1905), I, Introd. §§ 11, 269, and 340; Caetani, *Chronographia Islamica*, Fasc. V, pp. 1154 f., lists all the references to ʿUrwa.

³⁹ Horovitz, *op. cit.*, pp. 551 f.

⁴⁰ E. Sachau, *Ibn Sa'd's Biography of Mohammed* (Leyden, 1904), III, Part I, Introd., p. xix.

⁴¹ Al-Balādhuri, *Kitāb al-Futuḥ al-Buldān*, ed. De Goeje (Leyden, 1866), p. 79; Ibn Hishām, *Das Leben Muhammads*, ed. Wüstenfeld (Göttingen, 1858–60), p. 961. Other scholars also had access to copies or originals of the Prophet's official communications; see al-Ṭabarī, *op. cit.*, I, 1717, and Ibn Hishām, p. 961.

⁴² *Das Leben, etc.*, III, lxxxi.

⁴³ Ibn Khallikān (De S.), II, 582 = Arabic text (Cairo ed.), I, 451 f.

after having memorized their contents he tore them up.⁴⁴ Later he permitted his writings and the material he dictated to be used by others. He is accused of having permitted a volume of traditions transmitted by him to be circulated without having read it through, although the volume had been submitted to him.⁴⁵

Several of the Umayyad caliphs thought highly of him, and he is supposed to have admitted that he forged traditions in their favor. The evidence for this charge is of dubious veracity. One would rather agree with Horovitz that whereas at the behest of the caliphs he departed from his former reticence and dictated traditions, this innovation does not prove that he invented *ḥadīth* in their interests. There is even a report, of which there are several versions, that he once engaged in a heated verbal battle with either Hishām or al-Walīd, who tried to force him to change a statement so that it would reflect adversely on ʿAlī. If true, the story does credit to al-Zuhrī's veracity and personal courage.⁴⁶ Whatever the facts may be, nothing has detracted from his reputation as a dependable jurist, traditionalist, and historian. The caliph ʿUmar II is reported to have sent letters to the various provinces recommending that al-Zuhrī be consulted in all legal difficulties, "for no man is better acquainted than he is with the *sunna* [usages] of times past."⁴⁷

His pupil, Maʿmar, is authority for the statement that in the library of the caliphs were piles of books (*dafātīr*) containing the writings or notes of al-Zuhrī, for he is quoted as saying, "We were of the opinion that we had heard much from al-Zuhrī till al-Walīd was killed; for then volumes from his treasure chambers [khazāʾin] were loaded upon beasts of burden. He [Maʿmar] means: filled with the learning of al-Zuhrī."⁴⁸ Al-Zuhrī was the author of *Kitāb al-Maghāzī*,⁴⁹ ("Book of the Wars"), which is frequently quoted. According to his own

⁴⁴ Al-Dhahabī, *op. cit.*, p. 67. See anecdotes on him in Horovitz, *op. cit.*, continued in *ibid.*, January, 1928, pp. 46 ff., indicating his changing attitude.

⁴⁵ Al-Dhahabī, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 72; al-Bukharī and others give variants of the story; see Horovitz, *op. cit.*, p. 41, and, for an estimate of his character and literary activities, pp. 46-50.

⁴⁷ Ibn Khallikān (De S.), II, 582; Huart, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

⁴⁸ Ibn Saʿd, IIb, 136; see also al-Dhahabī, *op. cit.*, p. 71 and note. Maʿmar ibn Rāshid here quoted was also the author of a *Book of Wars* (Horovitz, *op. cit.*, p. 168); he died 154 A.H. (Horovitz, *op. cit.*, pp. 48 f.; Sprenger, "Von Kremer's Edition of Wākidī," *op. cit.*, p. 211).

⁴⁹ Ḥājjī Khalīfa, §§ 10513 and 12464.

statement as recorded by al-Ṭabarī,⁵⁰ he wrote also a list of the caliphs with their ages, which Margoliouth calls one of the very earliest attempts at written history.⁵¹ Al-Zuhrī is also quoted as saying that he started to write a work on the North Arabian clans which he never completed.⁵² The same man who had commissioned him to write it also asked him to compose a biography (*sīra*) of the Prophet.⁵³ Al-Zuhrī's books, perhaps because of royal patronage, seemed to have been more adequately published and preserved than those of some of his contemporaries, for a scholar of the time of Al-Manṣūr (ruled 754-75 A.D.) said, quoting some traditions: "Al-Zuhrī informed me." Asked where he had met al-Zuhrī, he answered: "I have not met al-Zuhrī, but I found a book of his at Jerusalem."⁵⁴ His influence on Moslem studies was considerable: among his pupils were al-ʿĀmirī and Mālik ibn Anas, two outstanding canon lawyers. Sprenger was of the opinion that al-Zuhrī and one of his teachers, Shuraḥbīl ibn Saʿd, were influential in giving the biography of the Prophet a stereotyped pattern from which subsequent writers never departed.⁵⁵

Another historian, most of whose life was spent under the Umayyads, was Abū Mikhnaḥ (d. 154/744). He was the author of more than thirty historical monographs, considerable parts of which are preserved by al-Ṭabarī. Although most of the independent writings which have come down under his name are probably forgeries, it may be that the one on the death of Ḥusain, the son of ʿAlī, manuscripts of which exist in several libraries, is genuine.⁵⁶ One sees in the treatises of Abū Mikhnaḥ a continuation of the episodal type of historical writing begun by ʿUrwa. When Hishām asked al-ʿĀmash to write on the virtues of ʿUthmān and the sins of ʿAlī, he probably expected this sort of little treatise. In a collection of traditions on ʿUmar II there

⁵⁰ Al-Ṭabarī, II, 428; *The Years of the Caliphs* is twice quoted by Ṭabarī, *ibid.*, and p. 1269.

⁵¹ D. S. Margoliouth, *Early Development of Mohammedanism* (New York, 1914), p. 4.

⁵² *Kiṭāb al-Aghānī* (Bulaḡ, 1284-85 A.H.), XIX, 59, referred to by al-Dhahabī, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

⁵³ *Al-Aghānī*, *loc. cit.*

⁵⁴ Sprenger, *Origin and Progress of Writing*, p. 328, as from al-Khatīb al-Baghḍādī.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 202-10; Muir, *op. cit.*, I, xxxviii.

⁵⁶ Brockelmann, *op. cit.*, I, 65; *Encyc. Islam*, art. "Abu Mikhnaḥ"; De Slane's n. 17, p. 448, to Ibn Khallikān IV, 446; Sprenger, *Report of Researches into Muhammadan Libraries of Lucknow* (Calcutta, 1896), p. 3; *Encyc. Brit.* (9th ed.), art. "Ṭabarī," p. 2; *Fihrist*, I, 93.

are preserved two letters, one from that caliph asking Sālim ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿUmar to write a biography (*sīra*) of his grandfather ʿUmar I and the author's reply, promising to accede to the request.⁵⁷ From these indications, as well as from the writings of al-Zuhri, it is apparent that the scope of historical writings was beginning to broaden to include subject matter other than that dealing directly with the career of the Prophet.

Several other early historians are quoted frequently by later authors. Sprenger considered Abū Ishāq (d. 127 or 128 A.H., at an advanced age) and Abū Mijlaz (d. shortly after 100 A.H.) of great importance, for they represent a different line of tradition than that followed by Ibn Ishāq and Ibn Hishām. They are quoted by al-Bukharī and Ibn Saʿd; nearly the whole of Ibn Hibbān's biography of Mohammed was taken from Abū Ishāq.⁵⁸ Abū Ma'shar (d. 170/786-7), author of a work on *maghāzī*, spent part of his life under the Abbasids, but lived at Medina until 160, hence his work probably represents the studies of that school. He is quoted by al-Wāqidī, Ibn Saʿd, and al-Ṭabarī, who depended on him for chronological data.⁵⁹

Al-Suyūṭī preferred the *maghāzī* by Mūsā ibn ʿUqba (d. 141/758) to any other, which indicates that this early history was still extant in Egypt in the fifteenth century.⁶⁰ Nineteen excerpts from it exist in a college notebook of a student who lived at Damascus in the fourteenth century, which is preserved at Berlin.⁶¹ Mūsā was a student of al-Zuhri, on whose opinions he depended greatly, and, as seen above, he utilized the writings of Ibn ʿAbbās, the Prophet's cousin.⁶²

Along with strictly religious history, based on the traditions collected by recognized authorities, the Umayyad period witnessed an interest in other sorts of historical literature, much of which was hardly more than folklore.

The report that Ziyād, the foster-brother of Mu'āwīya, composed a

⁵⁷ Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, *Sīrat ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz* . . . (Cairo, 1346/1927), p. 125.

⁵⁸ Sprenger, "Von Kremer's Edition of Wāqidī," *op. cit.*, pp. 219 f.

⁵⁹ *Encyc. Islam*, Horovitz art. "Abū Ma'shar."

⁶⁰ Sprenger, "Von Kremer, etc.," *op. cit.*, p. 219; Mālik ibn Anas also had a very high estimate of Mūsā's work (see Horovitz, *Islamic Culture*, April, 1928, p. 165).

⁶¹ E. Sachau, "Das Berliner Fragment des Mūsā ibn ʿUqba," in *Sitzungsberichte der Königlich Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 1904, p. 445.

⁶² See *AJSJL*, LII (1935-36), 249.

book on the pretensions of Arab families, which he intended as a weapon for his descendants in case their origin was ever attacked, is somewhat dubious, although the book is mentioned in the *Fihrist*⁶³ as the first book of calumny.⁶⁴ If genuine, it is indicative of the general interest in genealogical studies, which had practical utility as well as serving to satisfy the inordinate family and tribal pride of the Arabs. It is noteworthy that the literary historian al-Šūlī (d. 946 A.D.) says that Ziyād was the first person to copy books, apparently meaning professionally. Genealogical lists served as an army roll, for state pensions and the shares in plunder were apportioned according to the participation of families in the conquests of Islam. Criticism of traditions, consisting largely of the study of the lives, characters, and connections of those who transmitted them, gave further impetus to genealogical studies. Reporters were arranged in classes (*tabaḳāt*). Then as now the preparation of genealogies furnished opportunities for forgeries. A poor but celebrated authority on the companions and life of Mohammed, Shuraḥbīl ibn Saʿd (d. 123 A.H.), turned his reputation to account. Sprenger said of him, "If a man made him a handsome present, he assured him his father or grandfather or some member of his family was close to the Prophet, and woe to the ancestors of those who did not pay."⁶⁵ It is unfortunate that extreme poverty and possibly failing mental powers in old age drove him to such dubious practices, which have tarnished his reputation, for the work of his younger days, especially on *maghāzī*, was regarded as dependable. Mūsā ibn ʿUḳba refers to the lists Shuraḥbīl wrote of the names of the emigrants to Medina and of those who had participated in the battles of Badr and Uhud.⁶⁶

The need of preserving genealogies led to the establishment of a rolls office. At first, public records for Syria were kept in Greek by Christian scribes, and in Persian for the eastern provinces. Al-Balādhurī says ʿAbd al-Mālik ibn Marwān first ordered the state registers

⁶³ *Fihrist*, p. 89, ll. 10 ff.

⁶⁴ Huart, *op. cit.*, p. 60; Brocklemann, *op. cit.*, I, 64; I am indebted to Miss Nabia Abbott, of the Oriental Institute, for drawing my attention to al-Šūlī's remark on Ziyād as a copyist; see al-Šūlī, *Adab al-Kuttāb* (Cairo, 1341), p. 122.

⁶⁵ *Op. cit.*, pp. 203 f.; see also p. 201, and Horovitz, *Islamic Culture*, 1927, pp. 552 f.; Ibn Saʿd, V, 228, 321; al-Dhahabī, ed. Fischer, in *ZDMG*, XLIV, 437; Ibn Hajar, IV, 321.

⁶⁶ Ibn Hajar, X, 361; see also IV, 321, for commendation of his knowledge of *maghāzī*; cf. Horovitz, *op. cit.*, p. 552.

to be written in Arabic in the year 81/700,⁶⁷ but Barhebraeus says the change from Greek to Arabic was made under Walīd ibn ʿAbd al-Mālik.⁶⁸ Al-Ḥajjāj, the governor of Iraq, transferred the register from Persian to Arabic about A.D. 700.⁶⁹ State archives, of course, are not strictly libraries, but their existence indicates a recognition of the value of preserving written records of public affairs.

We have noticed the rise of *maghāzī* literature, histories of the early wars of conquest, and biography (*sīra*) from the pens of serious scholars. At the same time a more popular and legendary variety also flourished, the hearers of which demanded no authorities. A great deal of it was highly fanciful and was originated and perpetuated by popular story-tellers (*kuṣṣās*), who recited such tales for the edification and amusement of those who gathered in public houses, on street corners, and at mosques, particularly on festal occasions. Stories of the birth and infancy of Mohammed were especially popular. Much as such tales were enjoyed by the common people, they and their relators were frowned upon by religious authorities, and the *kuṣṣās* were not infrequently forbidden to hold forth in mosques. Official disapprobation, however, had little or no effect on the propagation of this pious form of entertainment, and some of the stories were even committed to writing. It is related that the caliph ʿAbd al-Mālik, seeing his son reading such a book, commanded it to be burned and ordered him to study the Koran instead.⁷⁰ In addition to strictly Moslem literature, the Umayyads relished stories of Arab antiquity and the history of other peoples. Al-Masʿūdī has a charming account of how Muʿāwiya was in the habit of giving audience to his people, great and small, daily after the evening prayer and meal; then "he devoted a third of the night to the history of the Arabs and their famous battles, the histories of foreign peoples, their kings and their governments, the biographies of monarchs, including their wars and stratagems and methods of rule and other matters connected with

⁶⁷ *Origins of the Islamic State*, trans. P. Hitti (New York, 1916), p. 301.

⁶⁸ *The Chronography of Gregory Abūl-Faraj (Barhebraeus)*, trans. from Syriac by Budge (Oxford, 1932), p. 106.

⁶⁹ Al-Balādhurī, *op. cit.*, pp. 465 f.; *Fihrist*, p. 242, gives accounts of the transfer of both registers to Arabic. Al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn al-Muḥāḍarah* (Cairo, 1299) II, 9 seems to say that Arabic was first used for the Egyptian *diwān*'s sometime between 86 and 90 A.H.

⁷⁰ Nicholson, *op. cit.*, p. 247.

ancient history." After sleeping the second third of the night, the caliph had pages, in whose charge they were intrusted (evidently the royal librarians and readers), bring in books (*dafātir*, a Persian word for "notebooks" or "books"), in which were biographies of kings and accounts of their battles and tactics, which they read to him.⁷¹ These may have been the *Book of the Kings and Past Events* referred to in the *Fihrist*.⁷² There it is said that Mu'āwiya summoned from Ṣana'ā, in the Yemen, 'Ubad ibn Sharya to recount to him narratives of past events and the kings of the Arabs and foreigners, after which he commanded them to be recorded. The *Fihrist* also mentions a book of proverbs by the same writer. One of his historical works was much read as late as the fourth (tenth) century, when it was known to al-Mas'ūdī and al-Hamdānī.⁷³ Krenkow, however, believes that 'Ubad is a fictitious person and that both the *Book of Kings* and the *Book of Proverbs* are to be identified with the *Relation of 'Ubad Ibn Sharya*, which was actually the work of Ibn Ishāk and revised by Ibn Hishām, as was his biography of the Prophet.⁷⁴

Another Yemenite, who supplied several of the Umayyad caliphs with a considerable amount of historical, legendary, and biblical lore, and of whose reality there is no question, was Wahb ibn Munabbih (d. 110/728). He is the source from which Moslems have derived much of their knowledge of the ancient world, including that of the South Arabian civilizations. Wildly fanciful stories have been told of his erudition. For instance, he had read ten thousand chapters of the *Wisdom of Luḡmān*; seventy, seventy-two, seventy-three, or even ninety-two of the scriptures of Jews and Christians. Much of the material he recounted was highly legendary, and in later times stories of dubious origin were attributed to him, so that some have considered him merely an audacious liar.⁷⁵ The fault, however, lies rather with the nature of the material he transmitted and the use made of his

⁷¹ Al-Mas'ūdī, *Le paires d'or*, ed. Barbier de Meynard (Paris, 1869), V, 77 f.; see also Nicholson, *op. cit.*, pp. 194 f. The distinction between the activities of the first and last thirds of the night may be that in the first the caliph listened to recitals of history, whereas later he was read to from books. We have other allusions to caliphs' librarians reading to them. This does not necessarily imply that these rulers were illiterate.

⁷² P. 89.

⁷³ Goldziher, *op. cit.*, I, 182 f.

⁷⁴ Krenkow, "The Two Oldest Books on Arabic Folklore" (cont.), *Islamic Culture*, April, 1928, pp. 234-36.

⁷⁵ See De Slane's estimate of him in *Ibn Khallikān*, III, 673 nn.

name in after-years than with Wahb himself, for he appears to have been a man of piety and integrity.⁷⁶ At any rate, he is a source upon which subsequent historians drew heavily. Krenkow has recently edited his *Book of the Crowns concerning the Chronicles of the Kings of Himyār*,⁷⁷ revised by Ibn Hishām, who misused and enlarged it in the same fashion as he did the *Sīra* by Ibn Ishāk. Krenkow calls this work "the oldest book in profane Arabic literature which has been preserved" and "the only epic the Arabs have produced," carrying the story of the Arabs from creation to the time of Islam.⁷⁸ Wahb was acquainted with the legend of Alexander the Great (*Dhū'l-Ḳarnain*), although he makes him a Yemenite king, and there are other evidences for non-Semitic origins of some of his stories. It is obvious that he had read both Jewish and Christian literature, canonical and apocryphal, but much as he was indebted to his ancient sources, the distinctive quality of the book itself is due to "the exuberant imagination of the author, which has never been equaled again in Arabic literature."⁷⁹ The *Tijān*, as well as the above-mentioned *Relation of ʿUбайд ibn Sharyā*, served two purposes: to celebrate the glorious past of South Arabia and to furnish information on the nations of the past who are alluded to in the Koran.⁸⁰ Several other books covering a wide range of subject matter are ascribed to Wahb. His writings were handed down by his pupils and members of his own family. A grandson, ʿAbd al-Munʿim ibn Idrīs (d. 229 A.H.), devoted himself to their preservation.⁸¹ His *Kitāb al-Mubtada*, used by al-Thaʿlabī in the version of ʿAbd al-Munʿim, is attributed to the latter in the *Fihrist*.⁸² It gave the origin of man according to biblical accounts, and stories of prophets and saints of the past, so that it forms a sort of introduc-

⁷⁶ Horovitz gives very sympathetic sketches of Wahb's character and literary activities in his article, "Wahb ibn Munabbih," in *Encyc. Islam.*, and in "The Earliest Biographies, etc.," in *Islamic Culture*, 1927, pp. 553-59.

⁷⁷ For a résumé of *Al-Tijān* see Krenkow, *op. cit.*, January, 1928, pp. 55-89, and cont. April, 1928, pp. 204-36. This work is referred to by Yāḳūt, *op. cit.*, VII, 232, as *The Book of the Crowned Kings of Himyār and Reports and Stories concerning Them and Their Sepulchres and Their Poems*; see Horovitz, "Earliest Biographies," *op. cit.*, p. 557.

⁷⁸ Krenkow, *op. cit.*, pp. 232 f.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 233. For the frequent confusion of the Alexander legend with that of other heroes see *Encyc. Islam*, arts. "Dhū'l-Ḳarnain," "Iskandar," "Iskandar Nāma." Some version of the Alexander legend was known to Mohammed and utilized in the Koran in *Sūra* xviii on Mūsā, vss. 59 ff.; also vss. 82 ff. on Dhū'l-Ḳarnain.

⁸⁰ Krenkow, *op. cit.*, pp. 55 and 232 ff.

⁸¹ *Encyc. Islam*, art. "Wahb ibn Munabbih," p. 1084.

⁸² P. 94.

tion to the history of revelation which culminates in the Prophet of the Arabs. This is probably the same work which Ḥājji Khalifa called the *Kitāb al-Isrā'īlīyāt*, for Yāqūt says that Wahb "took much from old books which are known as Isrā'īlīyāt."⁸³ Two works containing wise sayings, the *Ḥikma* and the *Manʿiza*, are mentioned and were known in Spain in the sixth century A.H.⁸⁴ A translation of the Psalms of David, a theological work, *Kitāb al-Ḳadar*,⁸⁵ and a historical work, the *Futūḥ*,⁸⁶ are attributed to him. Becker discovered among the papyri of the Schott-Reinhardt collection a Fasciculus from a biography of Mohammed by Wahb dealing with events before the flight of Medina. As has been mentioned, this twenty-seven-page papyrus book, written on fifty-three sides, is the oldest Arabic book manuscript in existence. It is dated *dhul-ḡaʿda*, 229 A.H.⁸⁷ Horovitz observed that although the Heidelberg fragment adds little new information, it is important as establishing "the fact that early in the year 100 A.H. or earlier the biography of the Prophet was narrated exactly as in later works."⁸⁸ It appears, therefore, that the tradition that Wahb dealt with distinctly Moslem subjects, as well as ancient lore, is founded on fact.⁸⁹

The popularity enjoyed by Wahb is but one indication that the Arabs had by this time become interested in antiquity. Al-Masʿūdī says he saw in 303 A.H. at Iṣṭakhr a valuable book on the sciences of the Persians and the history of their kings, which had belonged to the royal library. It was taken by the Arabs in conquest, and in 113 A.H. was translated for Hishām ibn ʿAbd al-Mālik. Al-Masʿūdī drew some of his information on Persian history from this book.⁹⁰

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

⁸³ Yāqūt, *op. cit.*

⁸⁴ Ibn Saʿd, VIIb, 97; *Bibliotheca Arabico-Hispana*, ed. Codera and Ribera (1895), IX, 129 and 294.

⁸⁵ Yāqūt, *op. cit.*

⁸⁶ Ḥājji Khalifa, § 8932; on the writings of Wahb see Horovitz, "Earliest Biographies," *op. cit.*, pp. 555-57.

⁸⁷ Becker, *op. cit.*, I, 8 f.

⁸⁸ Horovitz, *op. cit.*, p. 559. This helps to substantiate Sprenger's thesis that the pattern of the biographies was set very early, and in the light of it one must perhaps qualify the statement that the oldest biography extant is Ibn Ishāq's in the recension of Ibn Hishām.

⁸⁹ According to Ibn Saʿd, VIIb, 97, the studies of Wahb embraced "narratives of the Prophet, of the pious and the Banū Isrā'īl."

⁹⁰ *Kitāb al-Tanbih*, ed. De Goeje (Leyden, 1894), p. 106.



Arabic Books and Libraries in the Umayyad Period (Concluded)

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ARABIC BOOKS AND LIBRARIES IN THE UMAIYAD PERIOD—*Concluded*

RUTH STELLHORN MACKENSEN

Moslems of the Umayyad period also turned to literature of the pre-Islamic days in the desert. As mentioned above, Wahb prepared collections of wise sayings and the *Fihrist* credited ʿUbaid with having written a book of proverbs. The same book⁹¹ mentions another work on the same subject (*Kitāb al-Amthāl*), by one ʿIkāla ibn Karīm al-Kilābī, written in the days of Yazīd son of Muʿāwiya (caliph 60–64/679–83). The author of the *Fihrist*, writing at the end of the fourth century after the Hijra, adds, "It is about fifty pages and I have seen it." The oldest collection of proverbs which survives is that of al-Mufaḍḍal al-Dabbī (d. 170/876, published at Stamboul in 1300). These fragments of the homely wisdom of the Bedawis appealed both to the general interest in the past and to the special interest of philologists, who found in them valuable sources for their minute linguistic studies, as well as legendary and historical material.⁹²

Even more enthusiastic was the gathering and study of ancient poetry. Although the formal collecting of it was the special province of the philologists, poetry also had a popular appeal. Accordingly, Hammād al-Rāwīya received a present of 100,000 dirhems from the caliph Walīd ibn Yazīd for his recital in one sitting of twenty-nine hundred odes composed before Mohammed.⁹³ This reciter is remembered chiefly for his collection, known as the *Muʿallaqāt*. His ability to judge poetry and poets, to detect plagiarisms and borrowings, was highly respected. Although a contemporary, al-Mufaḍḍal al-Dabbī, accused him of introducing his own verses into ancient poems, none possessed the critical ability to detect forgeries.⁹⁴ Unfortunately, many others succumbed to the same temptation, the

⁹¹ *Fihrist*, p. 90.

⁹² *Encyc. Islam*, art. "Mathāl"; Brockelmann, *op. cit.*, I, 67; Goldziher, *op. cit.*, II, 204.

⁹³ Ibn Khallikān (De S.), I, 470.

⁹⁴ *Aghānī*, V, 172, ll. 16 ff.; see art. on him in *Encyc. Islam*, and Nicholson, pp. 132–34.

recognition of which fact has thrown suspicion of late on the authenticity of all poetry purporting to come from the early days.⁹⁵

The cultivation and study of pre-Islamic as well as contemporary verse during the Umayyad period is so well known and has been treated so frequently by modern scholars that I shall restrict myself here chiefly to indications of the existence of poetry in writing. Sir Charles Lyall, whom few have equaled in appreciation and knowledge of ancient Arabic poetry, said:

It seems probable that the greater part, at any rate of pre-Islamic verse which has survived to us, was already in writing by the middle of the 4th century: either in the shape of *dīwān*'s, or collections consisting entirely of pieces by the same author, or of tribal aggregates, containing all the occasional pieces composed by members of one tribe or family, perhaps with the addition of the traditions which link them together, and grouped about the occasions which called them forth.⁹⁶

In the same article Lyall refers to *dīwān*'s as "a sort of library," that is, they represent efforts to collect, arrange, and preserve hitherto stray and scattered verses in a permanent form. Whether kept in the memory or in writing, these collections were the means whereby the old poetry passed on to later generations. Undoubtedly much was lost as the Arabs spread from the confines of their peninsula, but it is due to these early attempts at collecting that anything at all survives. Yunus the *kātib*, a singer of Persian origin whom Walid ibn Yazid brought to court from Medina, in 742 A.D. composed a *Book of Song* which served as a model for the more famous one (*Kitāb al-Aghānī*) of Abū'l-Faraj al-Isfahānī (d. 967 A.D.)⁹⁷

Al-Farazdak (b. 20, d. 110 or 114 A.H.), in a poem belonging to the famous exchange of satires (*naḳā'id*), between himself and Jarīr lists twenty-two poets, most of whom flourished before Mohammed, whom he claims as masters in his art, and speaks of their verses as in writing.⁹⁸ He mentions owning a complete edition of the odes of Labīd, the latter years of whose life were spent under Islam.⁹⁹

⁹⁵ For instance, see Tāḥā Ḥusain, *Al-Shi'r al-Jāhili* (Cairo, 1926), and *Al-Adab al-Jāhili* (Cairo, 1927); Margoliouth, "The Origins of Arabic Poetry," *JRAS*, 1925, pp. 417-49, from whom the Arabic scholar drew his theory.

⁹⁶ *Some Aspects of Ancient Arabic Poetry*, reprinted from the *Proceedings of the British Academy* (Oxford, 1918), VIII, 10.

⁹⁷ Huart, *op. cit.*, pp. 47 f.

⁹⁸ *The Nakā'id of Jarir and al-Farazdak*, ed. A. A. Bevan (Leyden, 1905-7), I, Part II, 200 f., with reference to the writing of the poems in vs. 61.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, vs. 57.

Dhū'l-Rumma (78–117 A.H.), a Bedawi poet of the same period, although able to write, considered it unbecoming (ʿaib) a nomad.¹⁰⁰ However, he dictated his composition to his *rāwīs*, who wrote them down, for he said, “A book does not forget or alter words or phrases which have taken the poet a long time to compose.”¹⁰¹

The poetess Laila al-Akhyaliyyā and the poet al-Nābigha engaged in a poetic quarrel of the usual sort, in which each lampooned the tribe of his rival. The tribe of al-Nābigha took offense at some of Laila's verses and lodged a complaint with the ruler of Medina, by whom ʿUmar I or ʿUthmān is probably meant. The intrepid poetess, hearing of their plan, added further fuel to the fire by appending the following verses to her satire.

News has reached me that a tribe at Shaurān is urging forward
jaded riding camels.
Night and morning is their embassy journeying with a sheet
of writing to get me flogged,
What a bad piece of work [on their part]!

Professor Krenkow points out that the people who were to lodge the complaint brought the offending piece of poetry to the arbitrator in writing.¹⁰²

Al-Ṭabarī quotes a certain ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAlī as saying he had collected the *dīwān*'s of the Banū Marwān (the Marwānid branch of the Umayyad house), and adds that no *dīwān* more complete or authoritative than that of Hishām is to be seen.¹⁰³ Several members of the royal house displayed poetic talents; outstanding among them were Yazīd (caliph 680–83 A.D.), son of Muʿāwiya and his mother Maisūn, who at Damascus sang of her longing for the freedom of desert life.¹⁰⁴ The greatest of them all was al-Walid II (caliph 743–44 A.D.), a poet probably of equal rank with the famous Abū Nuwās (d. ca. 810 A.D.).

A son of Jamʿa, the daughter of the poet al-Kuthayyir (d. 723 A.D.), is cited as authority for the statement that among the books of his father, containing the verses of al-Kuthayyir, a certain poem was

¹⁰⁰ *Aghānī*, XVI, 121, l. 9.

¹⁰¹ Krenkow, “The Use of Writing for the Preservation of Ancient Arabic Poetry,” in *A Volume of Oriental Studies Presented to E. G. Browne* (Cambridge, 1922), p. 266.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 263; the verses and episodes are given in *Aghānī*, IV, 134, ll. 7–11.

¹⁰³ Al-Ṭabarī, II, 1732, under the year 125. ¹⁰⁴ Nicholson, *op. cit.*, pp. 195 f.

found.¹⁰⁵ Probably many families prized little libraries of songs, and it is more than likely that the royal family owned a considerable quantity of poetry, both from the bygone days which they admired so greatly and the products of the numerous singers who flocked to their court and enjoyed their patronage. Most famous of these were Jarīr and al-Farazdak, whose poetic scolding match (as Nicholson aptly translates *muhājāt*) lasted for years and excited the enthusiasm of all classes of society. The verses which each flung at his rival were caught up by their respective partisans, who disputed endlessly about their merits. The court and even the army, according to a picturesque story in the *Aghānī*, entered the fray with zest.¹⁰⁶ A third poet, al-Akhṭal, who had come from Hira to Damascus, where he was a great favorite, sided with al-Farazdak and also engaged in *naḡā'id* with Jarīr.¹⁰⁷

Although the court of the caliphs drew most of the best-esteemed bards of the day, poetry also flourished in the Hijāz. A distorted picture of the times ensues if one presses too far the contrast between the free and easy life of the Umayyads and their followers and the stern Puritanism of the faithful of Medina. With all their preoccupation with matters religious, the inhabitants of that sacred city had their lighter moments, or perhaps more accurately one should say that Medinese society was of two kinds: one seriously devout and the other frivolous and luxury-loving. As elsewhere it is likely that some individuals enjoyed moments of gaiety as well as others of religious zeal. Mālik ibn Anas seems to have once had ambitions as a poet, but because of his lack of personal beauty, turned to law. The oft married Sukaina (d. 117/735), a great granddaughter of the Prophet, was a leader of fashion; a hairdress she affected was copied by those who wished to dress *à la Sukaina*. She was easily one of the most outstanding women of her time. Her personal courage, chastity, fastidiousness, and dignity, as well as her pride in her own beauty, her

¹⁰⁵ Krenkow, *op. cit.*, p. 266, from *Aghānī*, VIII, 30.

¹⁰⁶ *Aghānī*, VII, 55, ll. 12 ff.; see Nicholson, pp. 239 f. Professor D. B. Macdonald draws my attention to the Scotch expression "flyting" as the equivalent of *muhājāt*.

¹⁰⁷ In one of the Akhṭal's poems he refers to ancient manuscripts in the simile, "Just as if they were, through the length of time which has passed, decayed leaves of a book which are spread out" (*Diwān*, p. 156, l. 4, quoted by Krenkow, "The Use of Writing, etc.," *op. cit.*, p. 264). On the poets of the Umayyad period see Nicholson, pp. 235 ff., and Huart, pp. 46 ff.

daughter whom she decked with jewels, and her ancestry are elaborated by numerous writers. Anecdotes are related to illustrate her wit and fondness for perpetrating jokes and hoaxes.¹⁰⁸ As the daughter of the gifted poetess Rahab bint ʿImr al-Ḳais ibn ʿAdī, she was devoted to poetry, and her good taste and judgment brought the best poets of the day to her door. Ibn Khallikān preserves a story of how she pointed out the artificiality of the sentiments expressed in the verses of ʿUrwa ibn Uzaina, a poet and traditionalist of the tribe of Laith (d. 118/736). Meeting him one day, she asked him if he were the author of the verses

When I feel in my heart the flames of love, I try to cool its ardor
by draughts of water. Could I ever succeed in cooling with
water the exterior of my heart, how should I extinguish the
fire which rages in its interior?

He admitted they were his, and she asked him again if he had composed the following:

When I revealed to her the secret of my love, she replied, "You used to desire [secrecy and] concealment when with me; be veiled then [as to your passion]: see you not how many are around us?" To this I answered, "The love I bear you and [the pains] I feel have already cast a veil over my sight."

The poet acknowledged these also as his, on which the lady said to the slave girls standing around her, "You are free, if such verses ever came from a heart wounded by love!"¹⁰⁹ So great was the esteem in which Sukaina was held, her burial was delayed several hours, the governor having sent word that it be postponed until his arrival.¹¹⁰

Her character and activities are typical of one aspect of the life of those who found or were forced to accept Medina as a pleasant place of retirement from the political turmoil of the Syrian capital. It must be admitted that for many, including even members of the Umayyad house, this retirement to Medina was far from voluntary. A considerable group who for various reasons were unwelcome at the caliph's court in Damascus sought to make their practical exile as pleasant as possible, at the same time being conscious that Medina was no longer the center of the Moslem world. The more active and politically

¹⁰⁸ See *Aghānī*, XVII, 94, 97, 101; Ibn Khallikān (*De S.*), I, 581 ff.

¹⁰⁹ Ibn Khallikān, *ibid.*

¹¹⁰ *Encyc. Islam*, art. "Sukaina bint al-Ḥusain."

ambitious considered a life of gaiety and ease in the "provinces" a sorry substitute for participation in the affairs of state. Men of the caliber of ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz and ʿAbd al-Mālik frankly chafed at their confinement and sought means to end it. At any rate, they had the good fortune to possess the means of passing their time agreeably, for the booty which fell to their lot from the wars of conquest enriched many families who lived in a luxury unknown in pre-Islamic days, except to those Arabs who had come in contact with Persia and Byzantium. They owned beautiful palaces, gardens, and rich meadows in and near the city. Part of the population consisted of the devout, who were drawn to make Medina their home because of its sacred memories. Happy in the comparative quiet and seclusion of the sacred city, they devoted themselves to the study of tradition, upon which they built an elaborate legal and ritual system. Honored by this group, but not necessarily always an integral part of it, were numerous descendants of Mohammed. The career of Sukaina is evidence that at least some members of the family of the Prophet participated in the social life of Medina, the luxury of which became notorious.¹¹¹ This was the golden age of Medina, sung by poets who passed back and forth between the Hijāz and Syria.¹¹² ʿUrwa, whose encounter with Sukaina has just been related, in the company of several other poets once paid a visit to the court of Hishām ibn ʿAbd al-Mālik. ʿUrwa, a placid soul, whose poems on contentment circulated widely, was recognized by the caliph, who quoted some of his verses, and said, "I do not see that you act in conformity to your words, for you have now come from Hijāz to Syria in search of favors."

"Commander of the Faithful!" replied the poet, "You have given me a good lesson and reminded me of that which the lapse of time has caused me to forget."

He left at once and, mounting his camel, set off for Medina. That night Hishām noticed his absence and realized the probable consequences. "That man is a member of the tribe of ʿQuraish and his words are wisdom; he came to see me, but I repulsed him and refused to grant him what he required; he is also a poet and I shall be exposed to his satires."

¹¹¹ *Aghāni*, XXI, 197, l. 19; al-Ṭabarī, II, 1910.

¹¹² *Encyc. Islam*, art. "Madīna."

He sent off at once a messenger after ʿUrwa with a present of two thousand dinars, who overtook the poet at his house. ʿUrwa received him and the gift and said, "Give my salutation to the Commander of the Faithful, and ask him what he now thinks of my verses: I toiled for favors and was called a liar; I then returned home and they came to me."¹¹³

Although poetry enjoyed a tremendous popularity in Umayyad days, it was also put to practical use by the philologists, who found in the ancient lines the material for their studies. The invention of Arabic grammar is traditionally assigned to Abū'l-Aswad al-Duʿālī (d. ca. 69/688–89), of Baṣra, who is said to have received his original idea from the caliph ʿAlī. It is more likely that other reports which trace the suggestion to Ziyād ibn Abīhī are more dependable though less devout. Various stories are told to account for the need of this science; the element of truth in them seems to be that Persian converts, of whom there were many in Baṣra, so mutilated their newly adopted language that it was necessary to introduce a formal study of Arabic grammar. The tradition further credits Abū'l-Aswad with having composed a grammatical treatise, and this is confirmed by that careful scholar al-Nadīm, who says in the *Fihrist*, describing a most unusual library he was once privileged to examine:

I discovered also in these papers a proof that grammar was invented by Abū'l-Aswad; it was a document of four sheets on Chinese paper, I believe, and bearing this title, "Discourse on the Governing and the Governed Parts of Speech, by Abū'l-Aswad, in the Handwriting of Yaḥya ibn Yaʿmar" (one of the grammarian's disciples); underneath were inscribed in old characters (*bi khaṭṭ ʿatīk*) these words, "This is the handwriting of such a one, the grammarian." Then followed a note by al-Naḍar ibn Shumail.¹¹⁴

The school of grammarians thus started at Baṣra continued to flourish and was, from the end of the eighth century on, in constant rivalry with the school of Kūfa. Scholars of both places, however finespun their theories and distinctions, ultimately referred to

¹¹³ Ibn Khallikān (De S.), I, 582 f.

¹¹⁴ P. 41. This same library prized autographs of several early grammarians and philologists, among them one by Abū ʿAmr ibn al-ʿAlā; see *Encyc. Islam*, art. "Abū'l-Aswad"; art. on "Abū'l-Aswad" by Ibn Khallikān (De S.), I, 662 ff., and notes. Note here how the traditions of ʿAlī's and Ziyād's connections with the beginnings of the science are combined.

pre-Islamic usage as preserved in poetry for their proofs and sanctions. From the beginning at Baṣra,¹¹⁵ philologists busied themselves with collecting and writing down the verses still to be heard on the lips of the Bedawis of the desert, who spoke the purest Arabic. The collection of poetry owned by one of the founders of the schools of Baṣra, Abūʿl-ʿAmr ibn al-ʿAlāʾ al-Māzinī, has been referred to before.¹¹⁶ He was unusually conscientious in his methods, although he confessed forging at least one verse.¹¹⁷ Ibn Khallikān has several delightful anecdotes about him, one to the effect that each day he spent a coin for a new water-pitcher and another for a fresh nosegay. At evening he gave the latter to a maid, who tore the flowers to bits to perfume the water used by the household.¹¹⁸ His candor and sense of humor concerning his studies are well illustrated. One said to him, "Tell me of the work you composed on the subject which you call *Arabism*; does it contain all the language of the desert Arabs?" Abūʿl-ʿAmr answered that it did not, and his questioner then asked, "How do you manage when the Arabs furnish you with examples contrary to your own rules?" To this Abūʿl-ʿAmr replied, "I follow the majority of the cases and call the rest dialects."¹¹⁹

It appears from this conversation that he wrote some sort of treatise, based on his collection of sayings and poems.¹²⁰ The commentary of al-Sukkarī on the *ḏiẓwān* of Zuhair ibn Abī Sulma says that in addition to books Abūʿl-ʿAmr also collected ancient coins which had been found.¹²¹

The activities of Arabic philologists were but one aspect of the study and elucidation of the Koran which paralleled the study and collecting of traditions. The father of Koranic exegesis was ʿAbd

¹¹⁵ Lyall was of the opinion that the search for poetry was more active at Kūfa, which was near Hīra, where Arabic writing and literature were cultivated in pre-Islamic times. Kūfa was also the headquarters of ʿAlīʿ. See Lyall's edition of the *Mufaḍḍaliyyāt* (Oxford, 1918), II, xii f.

¹¹⁶ See above.

¹¹⁷ *Encyc. Islam*, art. "Abūʿl-ʿAmr ibn al-ʿAlāʾ."

¹¹⁸ Ibn Khallikān (*De S.*), II, 401.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 402.

¹²⁰ See also *Fihrist*, pp. 28 and 41 l. 2.

¹²¹ Manuscript of the German Oriental Society, information from a personal communication from Professor Krenkow. On his library see also J. Zaidan, *History of Islamic Civilization* (Cairo, 1922), III, 47, as from Ḥājjī Khalifa. On the schools of Baṣra and Kūfa see Nicholson, *op. cit.*, pp. 342 ff.

Allāh ibn ʿAbbās, Mohammed's cousin. The date of his death is given variously as 68/687-8 or 69 or 70. Once governor of Baṣra under ʿAlī, he proved unscrupulous, and, following the assassination of the latter, he found it advisable and agreeable to attach himself to Muʿāwiyā. Thereafter he devoted himself to literary pursuits. Politically an opportunist, he was hardly more dependable as a scholar. He and a much-quoted traditionalist, Abū Huraira (d. 57, 8 or 9 A.H.) fabricated so many tales to suit their several purposes that even their contemporaries could not have failed to recognize them as little better than audacious, though pious, liars. In spite of the fact that the Koran is said to contain all knowledge needful to mankind, Ibn ʿAbbās, like many others, drew on Jewish and Christian traditions and scriptures, although gathered secondhand. A South Arabian Jew, Kaʿb ibn Mātī, furnished him with much of his information. According to Barhebraeus, the gospels had been translated into Arabic for the Amīr ʿAmr ibn Saʿd, by John I, patriarch of Antioch, known as John of Sedras, who came to the archepiscopal throne in A.D. 631 and died in 648.¹²² Ibn ʿAbbās is one of the few Meccans reputed to have been able to write before the days of Islam. His library of notes as we have seen, was drawn upon by several scholars.¹²³ Whether or not the commentary attributed to him in al-Kalbī's redaction and presumably quoted by al-Thaʿlabī (d. 427/1036), of which several manuscripts exist,¹²⁴ actually goes back to him, it is likely that he made some sort of compilation. Fr. Buhl, in an article on him in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, says, "He did not however confine himself to relating occasional traditions and to answering questions put to him; he welded his tales into a great system which took into account the creation, the history of mankind, and the pre-Islamic times."¹²⁵ A commentary is also ascribed to Saʿīd ibn Jubair (d. 95/714), who was noted for his piety and learning.¹²⁶ The writings of the earliest Koranic

¹²² *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, ed. Abbeloos and Lamy (Paris, 1872-77), I, 275. Is the Amīr referred to ʿAmr ibn Saʿīd al-Ashdaq, a nephew of Marwān who was put to death 70/689-90 because of his ambitions for the caliphate? See the *Encyc. Islam* art. on him; also *Encyc. Brit.* (9th ed.), art. "Syriac Literature," by Wright, p. 839.

¹²³ See above; Sprenger, *Das Leben*, I, xciv.

¹²⁴ Printed in Bombay, 1302 A.H.

¹²⁵ See also Nicholson, pp. 144 f.; Brockelmann, I, 90, Sprenger, *Das Leben*, etc., pp. cvi-cxv. On the undependability of Ibn ʿAbbās and Abū Huraira see also III, lxxxii ff., and Caetani, *Annali dell'Islām* (Milan, 1905), I, 47-51.

¹²⁶ *Fihrist*, p. 34, ll. 6-7.

exegetes have not come down intact, but are incorporated in the enormous commentary of al-Ṭabarī (d. 922 A.D.).

At Damascus especially Moslems came into contact with Christian learning, and the beginnings of Moslem theology and philosophy are doubtless due, at least in part, to this influence. The simple faith of early Islam became self-conscious when brought up against another religion possessed of an elaborate system of doctrine and ritual, as well as a scripture collected in a real book, giving a biography of its founder. Christians were employed regularly by Muʿāwiyā and succeeding caliphs of his house, and not a few rose to positions of influence at court. Sergius, the father of John of Damascus, the last great theologian of the Greek church, for a long time served them as treasurer. Later his son became *wazīr*—a position he held until he withdrew from active affairs to a life of contemplation. John's writings and those of his pupil, Theodorus Abucara, contained treatises on Islam in the form of debates between Christians and Moslems. A common introduction, "When the Saracen says to you such and such, then you will reply . . . , " would indicate that discussion between exponents of the two religions was common at Damascus.¹²⁷ Professor Arnold said, "The very form and arrangement of the oldest rule of faith in the Arabic language suggest a comparison with similar treatises of St. John of Damascus and other Christian fathers."¹²⁸

Two of the earliest sects of Islam arose in Syria, the Ḳadarites and the Murjites. The latter are so called because they postpone or defer judgment against sinful Moslems until the day of final reckoning, and in fact this sect denied the orthodox doctrine of eternal punishment and emphasized the goodness of Allah and his love for mankind. This position agrees with the teaching of the Eastern church as formulated by John of Damascus. The Ḳadarites on their part dissented from the predestinarianism which characterized Mohammed's teaching in the latter part of his life and which was accepted by most of his followers, and preached instead the doctrine of free will. Once more the influence of Eastern Christianity is evident. Eventually the Ḳadarite position merged with that of the Muʿtazilites.¹²⁹ How much

¹²⁷ Macdonald, *op. cit.*, pp. 131 f.

¹²⁸ *The Preaching of Islam* (New York, 1913), p. 74; see also von Kremer, *Kulturgeschichtliche Streifzüge auf dem Gebiete des Islams* (Leipzig, 1873), p. 8.

¹²⁹ Macdonald, *op. cit.*, pp. 131 ff., and arts. Ḳadar and Ḳadariya in *Encyc. Islam*; Arnold, *op. cit.*; Nallino, "Sul nome di Qadariti," in *Rivista degli studi orient.*, VII, 461 ff.;

actual writing was done by these early theologians is questionable. Whatever was done probably took the form of short treatises, of which the religious exhortation written by al-Ḥasan of Baṣra (d. 110/728–9)¹³⁰ to the caliph ʿUmar II may be regarded as typical. The versatile Wahb ibn Munabbih is said to have written on *Ḳadar*. Krenkow suggests that part of this work may be preserved in the *Tījān*, of which the earlier portions in their present form are full of discussions on *Ḳadar*.¹³¹

Of course it must not be forgotten that several Arab tribes had accepted Christianity before the time of Mohammed, as in the case of the Lakhmids and Ghassanids, and part of the influence of Christian thought may perhaps be traced to them. Most of the Christian Arabs eventually accepted Islam, but even those who remained loyal to their old faith lived in contact with Moslems, as did the poet Akhtal, of Hira, who flourished at the court of Damascus. Moslem mysticism also developed from contacts with Christian hermits and monks who were scattered throughout Arabia, Syria, and Iraq.¹³² Some of the Christian Arabs had come in contact with Greek thought, as is to be seen in the case of George, who was ordained bishop of the Monophysite Arabs in Iraq in A.D. 686. He lived at ʿĀḳōlā—that is, Kūfa—and died in 724. He wrote extensively on theology and philosophy, his main work being a version of the *Organon* of Aristotle, with commentary.¹³³

The precise degree and nature of Christian influence on Moslem thought at Damascus of course cannot be ascertained. Professor Macdonald has said, "We are not to think of the Moslem divines as studying the writings of the Greek fathers, but as picking up ideas from them in practical intercourse and controversy."¹³⁴

Wensinck, *The Muslim Creed* (Cambridge, 1932), pp. 51 f. A modern Moslem reviewing this last work disagrees with this position and suggests rather that John of Damascus was influenced by Islam (review in *Islamic Culture*, April, 1933, p. 337).

¹³⁰ For the text of this treatise see von Kremer, *Geschichte der herrschenden Ideen des Islams* (Leipzig, 1868), p. 22.

¹³¹ Krenkow, "The Two Oldest Books . . . ," *op. cit.*, p. 232.

¹³² See my art., "Background of the History of Moslem Libraries," in *AJSL*, LII, No. 2 (January, 1936), p. 106.

¹³³ Sarton, *Introduction to the History of Science* (Baltimore, 1927–31), I, 493; Wright, art. "Syriac Literature," *Encyc. Brit.* (9th), p. 841.

¹³⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 132.

A most vexed and probably never to be settled question is that of the transmission of Greek philosophy and science, much of which was in the hands of the Christians of Syria and Egypt, to the Arabs during the Umayyad period. This centers about the problem of the dependability of several statements to the effect that the prince Khālid ibn Yazīd (665–704 or 8 A.D.), a grandson of Mu‘āwīya, caused translations to be made of Greek books on alchemy, medicine, and astronomy (or astrology). According to the *Fihrist* (written 987, author d. 995 A.D.), the first translations made under Islam from one language to another were the work of a group of Greek philosophers of Egypt who translated from Greek and Coptic for Khālid, “the philosopher of the family of Marwān who was a lover of the sciences.”¹³⁵ On page 244 of the same work a certain Stephen the Elder, who has not been identified with any certainty, is said to have translated for the prince. Khālid was the first to investigate the books of the ancients on alchemy. He was an eloquent orator, a poet, a man of enthusiasm and judgment. He caused books on medicine, astrology, and alchemy to be translated, and was himself the author of several books and treatises and verses on alchemical matters. Al-Nadīm, the author of the *Fihrist*, says he saw three works of Khālid’s, one book in long and short recensions, in all, about five hundred pages of his compositions. Having been deprived of the hope of the caliphate, his art became his solace, in which some say he was successful; “Allah knows best whether it is true!” Nevertheless his undertakings were not due to selfish motives but for the benefit of his brethren and companions.¹³⁶ Among the writings of al-Madā’inī (d. 225 A.H.) there was one commenting on an ode by Khālid.¹³⁷

Earlier writers knew something of Khālid’s studies. Ibn Kutaiba (d. probably 276/889 or a few years earlier) refers to him as the most learned among the Kuraish in the various sciences, and as a poet.¹³⁸

¹³⁵ *Fihrist*, p. 242.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 354; on p. 353 he is listed among the philosophers. Contrary to this representation of him as living in retirement, numerous references in Arabic histories indicate that he continued to have some interests in public affairs. According to one account, it was he who advised ‘Abd al-Mālik to forbid the use of Greek coins and to mint money bearing the name of Allah. As a result, this caliph began to coin dinars and dirhems in 76 A.H. See Ibn al-Athīr under the year 76 (Tornberg ed.; Leyden, 1851–76), p. 337.

¹³⁷ *Fihrist*, p. 104, ll. 5–6.

¹³⁸ *Ibn Coteiba*, “Handbuch der Geschichte, etc.,” ed. Wüstenfeld (Göttingen, 1850), p. 179.

Abū'l-Faraj al-Isfahānī (d. 967 A.D.) speaks of his devotion to alchemy and quotes some verses presumably by him.¹³⁹ Al-Mas'ūdī (d. 956 A.D.) gives three verses consisting of a recipe for making gold.¹⁴⁰ According to a late writer, Ḥājji Khalifa (d. 1656 A.D.), these are from an alchemical poem of some 2,315 verses, called *The Paradise of Wisdom on the Science of Alchemy*.¹⁴¹

After the publication of the *Fihrist*, writers continued to mention the scientific or pseudo-scientific and poetic gifts of the young prince; some barely refer to him, others give fairly long biographical sketches. Yāqūt (d. 1229 A.D.)¹⁴² says he recited traditions on the authority of his father, al-Zuhrī and others, but adds no new information on his medical, alchemical, or poetical writings. The same may be said of the notices of Ibn al-Ṭiṭṭakā,¹⁴³ writing in A.D. 1300, and Ibn Taghribirdī (probably d. 874/1469). The latter mentions a report that he composed *Ḥadīth al-Sufyānī*.¹⁴⁴ Ibn Khallikān (d. 1282 A.D.) praises his scientific skill and knowledge, which are exemplified by the quality of his writings. This author also tells us that Khālīd studied alchemy with a Greek monk named Marianos.¹⁴⁵ Ḥājji Khalifa (seventeenth century) refers to Khālīd frequently, noticing the translations made for him and his writings, and links his name with that of Geber.¹⁴⁶ Ibn al-Ḳiftī (d. 1248 A.D.) does not list him among the philosophers and scientists, but quotes one Ibn al-Sinbādī, a scientist, as seeing in the royal library of the Fatimids of Cairo in 435/1044 a bronze globe made by Ptolemy, which bore an inscription to the effect that it had been in the possession of Khālīd ibn Yazīd ibn Mu'āwīya.¹⁴⁷

No Arabic writer except Ibn Khaldūn (d. 1406 A.D.) has anything except words of praise for Khālīd. Ibn Khaldūn, however, questions these favorable reports of his abilities, doubting whether a prince of

¹³⁹ *Aghānī*, XVI, 88 f.; XVIII, 89.

¹⁴¹ IV, 413, § 9016.

¹⁴⁰ Al-Mas'ūdī, *Les prairies d'or*, VIII, 176.

¹⁴² *Op. cit.*, IV, 165–69.

¹⁴³ *Al-Fakhri*, ed. Ahlwardt (Gotha, 1860), p. 164.

¹⁴⁴ *Annales*, ed. Juynboll and Matthes (Leyden, 1851), I, 245 f. and 554. The supplanting of the Sufyānid branch of the Umayyad house by the Marwānids on the accession of Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam appears to have given rise to an Imāmite party expressing its hopes in a sort of *Mahdī*, al-Sufyānī. The *Aghānī* (XVI, 88) says that Khālīd was the first to start this. See *Encyc. Islam*, art. "Al-Mahdī," by Macdonald, p. 114.

¹⁴⁵ Ibn Khallikān (*De S.*), I, 481 ff.

¹⁴⁶ Ḥājji Khalifa, III, 94–95, 97, 592, § 7114; IV, 413, § 9016; V, 87, 280; VI, 53, § 12698.

¹⁴⁷ *Ta'rikh al-Hukamā'*, ed. Lippert (Leipzig, 1903), p. 440.

the Umayyad house could have comprehended the theoretical and practical aspects of subjects, which presuppose much knowledge and study.¹⁴⁸

Most Western scholars, until very recently, have accepted the more favorable reports, seemingly ignoring Ibn Khaldūn's criticism.¹⁴⁹ In part they may have been influenced by a Latin treatise on alchemy, *Liber de compositione alchemiae*, translated from Arabic by Robert of Chester in A.D. 1144. It purports to be the work of Khālid (*Calid, King of the Egyptians*), edited by Morienus Romanus, a hermit of Jerusalem. However, the work actually belongs to a much later period than that of Khālid.¹⁵⁰ His name is also connected with the *Book of Crates*, which is said to have been translated for or under him, but this Arabic rendering of a Greek work can be no earlier than the end of the eighth century, and probably belongs to the ninth.¹⁵¹

Julius Ruska, in his detailed study of all the reports of Khālid's scientific activities and the extant works purporting to come from his hand, has rejected the whole as a legend. He points to the fact that later writers—for instance, Ibn Khallikān and Ḥājjī Khalifa—knew many more details about him than did the earlier al-Mas'ūdī and al-Nadīm, although even in the *Fihrist* one finds the legend-building tendency at work. Ruska concludes that although it is possible that Khālid employed Egyptian scholars, there is no positive evidence of his scientific activity, and his connection with the Greek monk Morianus is entirely unwarranted.¹⁵² Ruska's study has served to clear away the mass of legend which has long surrounded the memory of the young Umayyad prince. Obviously there was a tendency to attach his name to anything which hinted of learning in the Umayyad

¹⁴⁸ *Prolegomena*, Arabic text (Bulaq, 1274/1857), p. 261, ll. 11 ff.; Quatremere's text in *Notices et extraits*, XVIII, 193 = De Slane's French translation, XXI, 209.

¹⁴⁹ M. Bertholet, *La chimie au Moyen Âge* (Paris, 1893), III, 2 ff.; Le Clerc, *Histoire de la médecine arabe* (Paris, 1876), I, 61 ff.

¹⁵⁰ See Sarton, *op. cit.*, II, 176; J. Ruska, *Arabische Alchemisten*, I: *Chālid Ibn Yazid Ibn Mu'āwiya* (Heidelberg, 1924), pp. 31 ff.

¹⁵¹ Bertholet (*op. cit.*) gives the text and translation of the *Book of Crates*; see Sarton, I, 495; Ruska, *op. cit.*, pp. 12 ff.

¹⁵² See Ruska's entire study, especially conclusions; also Sarton, I, 495; L. Thorndike, *Magic and Experimental Science* (New York, 1923), pp. 214 ff. E. J. Holmyard (*Makers of Chemistry* [Oxford, 1931], pp. 43 ff.), points out that the story of Khālid is valuable as showing what Mohammedan chemists believed about the origin of alchemy in Islam.

period. As illustrative, one may quote from Krenkow's article on Arabic libraries in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*:

The earliest record of anything like a public library is connected with the name of Khālīd ibn Yazīd ibn Mu'āwīya, who devoted his life to the study of Greek sciences, particularly alchemy and medicine. We are told that he caused such books to be translated, and when an epidemic occurred at the beginning of the reign of 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz, he commanded the books to be fetched out of the library [*Khizāna*] to be made available for the people.¹⁵³

Khālīd, according to most authorities, died 85/704 and certainly not later than 90/708-9, whereas 'Umar II was caliph 99/717 to 101/720.

It appears, however, that Ruska, like Ibn Khaldūn, is reluctant to attribute learning to an Umayyad. The Arabic historian obviously admired the early Abbasids and their efforts in behalf of scholarship and regarded their predecessors as little better than ignorant Bedawis; Khālīd was a prince of the Umayyad house, therefore he could not possibly have had any intellectual interests. Granted that much which has been attributed to Khālīd is absolutely unfounded, the question remains, How did the legend arise? We know that the Abbasids did all in their power to blot out the memory of the Umayyads, and when that failed, to falsify their memory. Accordingly, writers of that period, and subsequently, seldom attribute any virtue to the members of the previous dynasty. Hence, unless there was some element of truth to the stories of Khālīd's activity, some genuine tradition of scholarly interest, including the beginning of translations from Greek works, too well known and persistent to be ignored, it is difficult to see why the reputation of the prince did not suffer with the rest of his family. The fact that the author of the *Fihrist*, on the whole a sober and careful investigator of the history of Arabic literature and scholarship, gives Khālīd a place among the learned men of Islam, is greatly in favor of believing that there was something to the tradition. Al-Nadīm's details, doubtless as Ruska suggests, belong to popular legend. Whether they were genuine or not, we must accept his word for the existence at his time of writings purporting to come from Khālīd.

It is of course possible that the fact that he never attained the

¹⁵³ Art. "Kitāb-khāna," p. 1045, Arabic source not given.

coveted caliphate prejudiced the Abbasids in his favor, so that he became in their eyes one like themselves, a philosopher-prince and a patron of learning. However, for their purposes it would have been far better to have represented all the Umayyads as entirely unlearned and indifferent to scholarly matters. Ibn Khaldūn, a late historian, agreed with the attitude of the Abbasid writers, and saw no reason to exempt Khālīd from his general condemnation of the Umayyads.

Khālīd probably was not much of a scientist, for his interest in alchemy is the most persistent part of the tradition, but it is certainly not impossible that an Umayyad prince, deprived of political aspirations, may have turned to the Greek studies current among the non-Moslem residents of Damascus and Egypt. We have seen that intercourse between Moslems and Christians was very free in the days of the Umayyads. Others of the dynasty were devoted to poetry and to secular history. Khālīd, having once been accepted as exceptional among the Umayyads, his reputation grew by leaps and bounds.

Arabic historians preserve a few other hints that this period was not entirely devoid of a knowledge of foreign literature and learning. We have noticed this in the case of historical, biblical, and legendary lore. Barhebraeus says of Walid ibn ʿAbd al-Mālik (caliph 705–15 A.D.); "This Khalifah was well versed in outside [i.e., alien or profane] learning."¹⁵⁴ The *Fihrist* mentions a medical work, the *Pandects* (*Kitāb al-Kunnāsh*), written in Syriac by a certain Aaron (*Ahrun*) the priest, consisting of thirty discourses, which was translated by a physician Māsīrjīs, who added two more chapters.¹⁵⁵ The latter is listed as a translator from Syriac to Arabic and the author of two books. Al-Nadīm gives no indication of dates except that Aaron lived at the beginning of the Moslem era. Barhebraeus adds that Aaron, a contemporary of the Prophet, was an Alexandrian, whose *Kunnāsha fī l-Ṭibb* ("Principles of Medicine") is "found with us in Syriac."¹⁵⁶ In this place Barhebraeus calls the man who added to the work Sirjīs, but later¹⁵⁷ refers to him as Māsīrjiwaih, a physician of Baṣra, a Syrian as to language and a Jew by religion, who translated Aaron's work in the days of Marwān I (64/683—65/685) and adds an anecdote on him

¹⁵⁴ *Chronography, etc.*, p. 106.

¹⁵⁵ *Fihrist*, p. 297.

¹⁵⁶ *Chronicles* (Beirut ed.), p. 157; Pococke ed. (text), p. 159; (trans.), p. 99.

¹⁵⁷ Beirut ed., p. 192; Pococke (text), p. 198; (trans.), p. 127.

from a contemporary. This historian took his information from Ibn Juljul al-Andalusī, whom Ibn al-Ḳiftī and Ibn Abī Uṣaibi'a quote more fully.¹⁵⁸ They have substantially the same information on Aaron¹⁵⁹ as does the *Fihrist*. Both have fairly long sketches on the translator, which differ but slightly. Ibn al-Ḳiftī calls him Māsirjiwaih, with the alternative Māsirjis, and says he was a Jew of Baṣra, living in the time of ʿUmar II,¹⁶⁰ learned in medicine, who translated for this caliph Aaron's medical work, the *Pandects*, "the most excellent of ancient books of the time." Then he follows with a quotation from Ibn Juljul which says that Māsirjis made the translation in the days of Marwān, which was found by ʿUmar in the royal library (*khazā'in al-kutub*). The caliph ordered the book brought out and placed it in his place of prayer (*muṣallā*) after which he consulted Allah as to the desirability of bringing it out to the Moslems (to publish it, one manuscript, instead of *Moslems*, has "concerning its being brought out in Arabic"). After forty days had elapsed, apparently the verdict was favorable, for he caused it to be brought out to the people and published. Ibn Juljul says that Abū Bakr Mohammed ibn ʿAmr related this story to him in the Ḳarmūni Mosque in the year 359.¹⁶¹

This story of ʿUmar bringing out a medical book from the royal collections to the people, which amounts to publishing the work, bears some resemblances to that quoted above about Khālid bringing out books from the library (*khizāna*) to make them available to the people. Both events are placed in the reign of ʿUmar II. Are they two versions of the same affair, and is there some hint of supposed magical efficacy in a book on medicine?

Professor H. G. Farmer, of Glasgow, says that the manuscript of the *ʿArḍ Miṭṭah al-Nujūm*, of Hermes, in the Ambrosian Library is dated 743 (A.D.); of it I have been unable to locate any more information.¹⁶² If the date is genuine (is it the equivalent in the Arabic era to 743?),

¹⁵⁸ Ibn al-Ḳiftī, *op. cit.*, pp. 324 ff.; Ibn Abī ʿUṣaibi'a, *ʿUyūn al-Anbā fī Ṭabaqāt al-Aʿtibā*, compiled A.D. 1245 (Cairo, 1882), I, 163 f.

¹⁵⁹ Ibn al-Ḳiftī, p. 80; Ibn Abī ʿUṣaibi'a, I, 109, l. 15.

¹⁶⁰ Ibn Abī ʿUṣaibi'a simply places him in the Umayyad period, I, 163, l. 26, and lists a work by his son ʿIsā (*ibid.*, I, 204).

¹⁶¹ Ibn Abī ʿUṣaibi'a has Tarmudhī mosque. Ibn al-Ḳiftī adds two anecdotes on Māsirjis found also in Ibn Abī ʿUṣaibi'a, I, 163, ll. 31 f., and 164, ll. 11 f.

¹⁶² H. G. Farmer, *Historical Facts for Arabian Musical Influence* (London, 1930), p. 273; this title is mentioned in the *Fihrist*, p. 267, and Ibn al-Ḳiftī, p. 403.

it means that this manuscript of an astrological work is a century older than the Heidelberg papyrus mentioned above (229/844) and is valuable evidence for the beginnings of translations from Greek. These various indications of the first use of foreign literatures seem to suggest that the Arabs first interested themselves in what must have appeared to them as the practical sciences: medicine, astrology, and alchemy, and only later (and perhaps thereby) were attracted to the more abstract sciences and philosophy. Barhebraeus quotes the *Ḳādī Ṣāʿd ibn Aḥmad al-Andalusī* (d 462–1070) to the effect that during the Umayyad period the only science (other than their own language and law) which attracted the attention of the Arabs was medicine. Although cultivated only by certain individuals, it was generally approved because of its universal utility.¹⁶³ Muʿāwiya's study of history was also motivated by considerations of practicality, for he was especially devoted to accounts of the military tactics and state craft of rulers of the past.

As one reviews the various types of literature which were cultivated in the Umayyad period, it becomes apparent that it was not, as is so often supposed, one characterized by the dearth of literary activity, except for poetry. The cultivation of poetry, both ancient and contemporary, was most characteristic of the age, but several types of prose writings also had their beginnings. Much was done under royal patronage, but Medina was also a center for the poets of the Hijāz and students of religious matters. In Iraq, Baṣra and later Kūfa were the homes of scholars and poets, and from Ṣanaʿāʾ in the Yemen came men versed in ancient lore. The question of the beginnings of Arabic literature in Egypt also requires investigation, but, as Becker points out, they are quite obscure. It is most unlikely that all remnants of interest in Greek studies should have vanished when Egypt became a Moslem province. If there is anything to the Khālid tradition, it points to Egypt as the source of his study and one of the sources for the knowledge of Greek works in general. The *Hermes* text points in the same direction. ʿAbd Allāh, son of the conqueror of Egypt, Laith ibn Saʿd and Ibn Lahīʿa, are names connected intimately with the propagation of Moslem traditions, especially of an eschatological tinge. A papyrus page (*ṣaḥīfa*) of ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAmr, dealing with

¹⁶³ Probably from his "History of the Learned etc.," Pococke ed. (text) p. 246; (trans.), p. 160.

the final judgment, has survived, passing under the name of Ibn Lahī'a.¹⁶⁴ Egypt therefore appears to have shared with the rest of the Umayyad empire a growing interest in both religious and foreign studies and literature. However, these were not isolated centers, for, as in later times, singers, story-tellers, and scholars passed to and fro. Caliphs called them to the courts of Damascus or wrote them requesting information. Much was still passed on by word of mouth, but there was a real beginning in the preservation of literature by means of writing. One finds at once serious attempts to preserve the old, and real creative activity. Whether the early books were merely collections of students' notes and little treatises in the form of letters or more formal books, of which there were at least a few, the collecting of them, the recognition that such materials were worth keeping, can legitimately be considered the beginning of Moslem libraries. One may therefore speak of the libraries, even though few, of the caliphs and private individuals. The preservation of source materials is as truly a function of a library as is the treasuring of formally published books. If anything, at this stage of Arabic literary history the source material, consisting of the notes of scholars, taken from the lips of a few surviving companions, and the jotting-down of poetry from those who still remembered the ancient songs, are of greater importance than the actual books written at the time. Subsequent generations used and re-used the old material. But of books in our sense there were probably more than the fragmentary records and the exceedingly few survivals would suggest. A great age of intellectual and literary activity such as the early Abbasid period does not burst full blown without some earlier preparation. The Umayyad caliphs are said to have owned a volume of poetry composed in honor of the Lakhmid kings of the Christian Arabs of Hira, which had been put into writing for al-Nu'mān III (d. 605 or 7 A.D.), the last ruler of this pre-Moslem dynasty. It was written on boards and buried in his palace, where it was found by Mukhtār ibn Abī 'Ubaid in 65 A.H. when he was hunting for concealed treasure.¹⁶⁵ This book and the Persian history, alluded

¹⁶⁴ See *Encyc. Islam*, art. of L. H. Becker, "Egypt," pp. 19-20; Becker, *Papyri Schott-Reinhardt*, I, 9.

¹⁶⁵ Al-Suyūṭī *Muzhir fī 'ulūm al-lughā* (Cairo, 1282), I, 121; II, 237; al-Jumāhī *Ṭabaqāt*, ed. Hell, p. 10, ll. 13 ff.; Ibn Jinnī *Khaṣṣiṣ* (Cairo, 1914), I, 393. Margoliouth doubts the historicity of this report, and suggests that if it really goes back to Ḥammād al-Rāwīya, to whom it is accredited, it was intended to account for his immense knowledge of pre-Islamic verse (see "The Origins of Arabic Poetry," *JRAS*, 1925, p. 428).

to by Mas'ūdī, suggest that books may have been, not infrequently, found in and preserved from the loot of the early wars of conquest.

In the *Kitāb al-Jumahir fī Ma'rifat al-Jawahir* ("Book of Precious Stones"), by al-Bīrūnī, the manuscript of which Krenkow is preparing for publication, this versatile scholar, writing in the first half of the fifth century (early eleventh), mentions a book on jewels, written in the time of 'Abd al-Mālik (685-705 A.D.) which had fallen into his hands. This book actually gave prices of precious stones which al-Bīrūnī cites on occasions.¹⁶⁶ The writing of such a book in the Umayyad period is most significant evidence for the state of literature at the time, for it is not the sort of thing likely to be produced when the writing of books was in its infancy and uncommon. It bespeaks a fairly advanced state of literary activity and furnishes one more bit of proof that religious studies and poetry were not the sole preoccupations of the writing and reading world.

One must be ever on guard lest he accept uncritically the estimate of the Umayyads foisted upon the world by their successors, the brilliant but often unscrupulous Abbasids. Without any desire to whiten the reputation of the caliphs at Damascus, who undoubtedly deserve many of the harsh accusations hurled at them both by their contemporaries and by succeeding generations, it is well to recognize that they were not utterly unworthy.

Mu'āwīya, the founder of the dynasty, was as astute a political and military leader as any in Moslem annals, and he was not devoid of an appreciation for literature. Susceptible to the charms of poetry, he knew how to utilize poets to further his own designs. By his patronage he won the support of the poets whom Lammens refers to as the journalists of the period. "To win them over was to have a good press and at the same time gained their tribes to the cause of order, for the tribes usually agreed with the ideas spread by their bards."¹⁶⁷ Part of his purpose was to swing public opinion in favor of his intention to name his son Yazīd as his successor, thereby making the caliphate hereditary. Yazīd was himself a poet and the friend of poets, and his father did not hesitate to exploit this bond of loyalty. In utilizing the

¹⁶⁶ Private communication from Professor Krenkow. He utilizes al-Bīrūnī's book in his article, "The Oldest Western Account of Chinese Porcelain," in *Islamic Culture*, July, 1933, pp. 464 ff.

¹⁶⁷ *Encyc. Islam*, art. "Mu'āwīya," pp. 619-20.

poets as agents of propaganda, Mu^cāwiya anticipated the common practice of later caliphs and lesser princelings and imitated the example of the Prophet. Mohammed, although avowedly the enemy of many singers of his day and objecting violently to any implication that he was himself merely another poet, found in Ḥassān ibn Thābit an invaluable ally. Ḥassān frequented the courts of the Ghassānid and Lakhmid kings and the fair at ʿUkāz in the days before Mohammed came to the front. After the Prophet's repeated successes marked him as the coming leader of the Arabs, Ḥassān threw in his lot with the new cause. He readily answered the lampoons of unbelieving poets and brought about the conversion of the tribe of Tamīm, after defeating its champions in a poetic contest. He continued to support the cause of the first three caliphs and is the founder of Moslem religious verse.¹⁶⁸ Margoliouth says that a copy of the poems of Ḥassān was kept at Medina and was regularly renewed whenever the writing showed signs of fading.¹⁶⁹

Although these considerations have led us far afield from the precise history of Moslem libraries, it is hoped they have made clear how these libraries, which rapidly became a characteristic institution in the intellectual and cultural life of Islam, grew from two roots. They are based in part on the example of the libraries of the world into which Islam spread, and are at the same time the natural outgrowth of the method by which their own literature was collected. The Koran resulted from the desire to preserve the revelations received by Mohammed from on high, and the great *dīwān*'s from the gathering of poetic fragments of pre-Islamic days, and traditions, history, and law from the collecting of records of the words and deeds of the Prophet.¹⁷⁰

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¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, art. "Ḥassān ibn Thābit"; Hirschfeld's Introduction to his edition of the *Divān of Ḥassān ibn Thābit* ("Gibb Series" [Leyden, 1910]).

¹⁶⁹ *Early Development*, p. 89; no Arabic authority cited. For estimates of the intellectual life and the state of education in the Umayyad period see H. Lammens, *La Syrie* (Beirut, 1921), chap. vi; *Encyc. Islam*, arts. "Masdjid" sect. "Mosque as an Educational Center," p. 351), "Umayyads," and "Mu^cāwiya"; Muir, *Annals of the Early Caliphate* (London, 1883), p. 46.

¹⁷⁰ Since this article was accepted for publication the literature on the subject has increased considerably. The article will be brought up to date in a short note at a future time.

[Concluded]



Supplementary Notes to "Arabic Books and Libraries in the Umayyad Period"

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SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES TO "ARABIC BOOKS AND LIBRARIES
IN THE UMAIYAD PERIOD"

The following notes are additions to my previous article, "Arabic Books and Libraries in the Umayyad Period" (*AJSL*, July, 1936, pp. 245 ff.; July, 1937, pp. 239 ff.; October, 1937, pp. 41 ff.), which, it is hoped, will be useful to those interested in Umayyad contributions to Islamic civilization. The numbers correspond to those of the footnotes to which they are supplementary.

NOTE 29. R. Strothmann, "Das Problem der literarischen Persönlichkeit Zaid ibn ʿAlī," *Der Islam*, XIII (1923), 1 ff. The text of the legal compendium was published by Griffini, *Corpus iuris di Zaid ibn ʿAlī* (Milan, 1919).

NOTE 73. Al-Masʿūdī (d. A.D. 956) states (*Murūj al-Dhahab*, IV, 89) that the *Book of Kings* by ʿUbad ibn Sharyā circulated widely in his day; it was used by Ḥamdānī (d. A.D. 945) in his *Iklīl* and later in the historical commentary to *The Himyarite Ode*, probably also written by the author of the ode, Nashwān ibn Saʿīd al-Ḥimyarī (d. A.D. 1177) (see Nicholson, *Literary History of the Arabs*, p. 13). The present form of the *Relation* of ʿUbad, which consists of answers to questions asked by Muʿāwīya, agrees with the statement of the *Fihrist*, p. 89, to the effect that this caliph summoned him to court to ask him for historical information, after which he caused it to be recorded. Taken with the above-mentioned use of this work, there seems to be considerable evidence for its authenticity and the historicity of its author. It is published as a supplement to the *Tijān* of Wahb ibn Munabbih in the recension of Ibn Hishām (Hyderabad, A.H. 1347) (see Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Literatur*, Suppl. I [1937], pp. 100 f.).

NOTE 107. See also Brockelmann, *op. cit.*, Suppl. I, pp. 76 ff.

NOTE 126. The *Fihrist*, p. 34, also refers to a *Tafsīr* by Al-Ḥasan of Baṣra (d. 110/728-29). His glosses were collected in commentary form by ʿAmr ibn ʿUbad (d. 145/762) (see G. Bergsträsser, "Die Koranlesung des Ḥasan von Baṣra," *Islamica*, II [1926], 11-57). The chief source for Ḥasan's comments is the *Ithāf* of Al-Bannāʾ (d. A.H. 1117), published at Cairo, A.H. 1317 (see also Brockelmann, *op. cit.*, Suppl. I, pp. 102 f.).

NOTE 130. Other tractates by Al-Ḥasan have come to light recently, *Risāla Lālelī*, MS 1703, published in *Le Monde oriental*, VII, 97; for a Turkish translation of it see Brockelmann, *op. cit.*, Suppl. I, p. 103. His work on *Qadar* (Köprülü, MS 1589, and an abridgment Aya Sofya MS 3998) is published and discussed by H. Ritter, "Studien zur Geschichte der islamischen Frömmigkeit I, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī," *Der Islam*, XXI (1933), 1-83. Its significance is dealt with by J. Obermann, "Political Theology in Early Islam," *JAOS*, LV (1935), 138-62. These tractates agree with other indications for the nature of early Arabic prose literature, the writings of ʿUrwa and ʿUbad ibn Sharyā, in being in the form of brief treatises written in response to inquiries,

usually from caliphs. The letter of ʿAbd al-Malik ordering him to vindicate himself from charges made by certain unnamed persons that he was teaching subversive doctrine is prefixed to the *Ḳadar Risāla*. The abridgment, apparently sent to the caliph by Al-Ḥajjāj, governor of Iraq, is accompanied by a note of warm commendation of Al-Ḥasan (see Obermann, *op. cit.*, pp. 140-43). Like all Al-Ḥasan's writings, it is a devout and emotional homily rather than a systematic presentation of his subject.

It is apparent that Al-Ḥasan's teachings on free will were of political significance. Obermann points out that the *terminus ad quem* for the writing of this work is 86/705, the year in which ʿAbd al-Malik died, and the hitherto friendly relations between the governor and Ḥasan were severed (*ibid.*, p. 141). We have other indications that about the turn of the century the *Ḳadar* controversy had become an acute issue with political as well as religious implications. In 699 Maʿbad al-Juhānī was martyred because of his teachings on free will, by order of ʿAbd al-Malik or Al-Ḥajjāj. His pupil Ghaylān al-Dimashkī met the same fate in 730 at the hands of Hishām, a son of ʿAbd al-Malik. (For a letter of reproof addressed to ʿUmar II by Al-Dimashkī and his controversy with Hishām see M. Horten, *Die philosophischen Systeme . . . im Islam* [Bonn, 1912], pp. 122 ff.) The late professor A. V. W. Jackson (*Zoroastrian Studies* [New York; 1928], pp. 238-40) drew attention to the report that Maʿbad learned the doctrine of *Ḳadar* from a Persian Abū Yūnas Sn̄sūyh or Sinbūya (Maḳrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ* [Cairo, A.H. 1326], IV, 181, ll. 25-27; Al-Shahrastānī, *Book of the Religious and Philosophical Sects*, Arabic text, ed. Cureton [Leipzig, 1923], I, 17, trans. Th. Haarbrücker [Halle, 1850], I, 25; see also Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, I, 282 f.; A. von Kremer, *Streifzüge*, p. 9, n. 1), and raises the question whether Muslim teachings on free will may not have been influenced by Zoroastrianism, to which the doctrine at some time became essential, as well as by Christian and Neo-Platonic thought.

Ḥasan was of Persian extraction and lived in Baṣra, a city open to Persian influence. It is noteworthy that Iraq and Persia were frequently the scenes of politico-religious disaffections, the dangers of which to Umayyad prestige were fully recognized by the caliphs. During the reign of ʿAbd al-Malik the vigorous and ruthless measures of Al-Ḥajjāj and his lieutenants were needed to eliminate the rival caliph ʿAbd Allah ibn al-Zubair, who exercised considerable influence in Iraq, to suppress the ʿAlid party of Al-Mukhtār ibn Abī ʿUbaid at Kufa and the militant Azraqites, whose zeal endangered the peace of the Persian provinces. This last was hardly settled when the governor of Sijistān, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, revolted and was subdued only after two years of vigorous campaigning (see *Encyclopedia of Islam*, arts. "ʿAbd al-Malik" and "Al-Ḥadjdjādī"; P. K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs* [London, 1937], pp. 206 ff.).

It is not surprising that ʿAbd al-Malik, who was most concerned to bring about the unification of the empire, viewed with apprehension the charges

lodged by some of his supporters that the saintly Ḥasan of Baṣra was guilty of religious views which were inimical to the solidarity of the state. Obermann sees correctly that the doctrine of individual self-responsibility was not merely an academic question but might easily undermine the authority of the state and especially Umayyad domination (*op. cit.*, p. 145). He does not, however, suggest that Ḥasan's views might have been of Persian origin, and therefore congenial to, or possibly the expression of, Persian opposition to Arab arrogance. Rather, Obermann denies that the Ḳadar ideology is of foreign origin and stresses the point that Ḥasan's teachings show no Jewish, Christian, or Greek influence, except in so far as such elements can be detected in the Koran, for Ḥasan bases his arguments on the authority of revealed scripture (*ibid.*, pp. 147 [n. 29] and 157-58 [n. 72]).

It is significant, nevertheless, as Obermann points out, that Ḥasan accuses his opponents of using their doctrine of predeterminism as an excuse for their "sinful appetites and treacherous iniquities," a statement which agrees with other evidence that this was a favorite justification of government officials for corrupt practices (Ibn Ḳutaiba, *Kitāb al-Ma'ārif*, ed. Wüstenfeld, p. 225). Furthermore, one of the men who brought these offenses to the attention of Ḥasan was his friend, and possibly pupil, the above-mentioned martyr, Ma'bad al-Juhanī (Obermann, *op. cit.*, pp. 150 and 153; on the relations of the two men see Ibn Ḳutaiba, *op. cit.*).

An amusing touch is lent to the controversy by Ḥasan's charge that his critics are actually ignorant of proper Arabic usage and by his temerity in enlightening them by quotations from poetry and popular expressions (*ibid.*, p. 152). Does not this also give us a glimpse into the deep-set antagonism between the "pure Arabs" and their Persian converts?

Another work on Ḳadar was composed by a contemporary of Al-Ḥasan, also of Persian extraction, Wahb ibn Munabbih (they both died 110/728-29), who, however, is quoted as saying that, after consulting some seventy prophetic writings, he regretted ever having written this book (Yakūt, *Irshad*, VII, 232). He is included in the list of Ḳadarites headed by Ma'bad (Ibn Ḳutaiba, *op. cit.*, p. 301). The text of his *Kitāb al-Ḳadar* is lost, unless, as Krenkow suggests, it is incorporated in the early pages of the *Tijān*, where there is considerable discussion of the subject (F. Krenkow, "Two Oldest Books, etc.," *Islamic Culture*, II [1928], 232). One cannot but wonder whether his retraction was not due to political pressure. He was imprisoned during the last years of his life and flogged to death by order of the governor of the Yemen, Yusuf al-Thakafi, who, like his famous son Al-Hajjāj, was a vigorous inquisitor of political and religious malcontents (Horovitz, art. "Wahb ibn-Munabbih," *Encyclopedia of Islam*, and *Islamic Culture*, I [1927], 553 ff.). Wahb's family, though settled in the Yemen since the time of Khusraw Anushirwan, apparently maintained connections with Persia, for he says that he had occasion from time to time to go to Herat to look after family affairs (Krenkow, *op. cit.*). The *Tijān* shows familiarity with Iran and some acquaintance with

the more eastern provinces; in fact, his folklore, which Krenkow notes is scarcely Semitic, may be Central Asian. It should also be noted that Wāḥb flourished at the time of the Muslim conquests of Transoxania.

Is it not more than likely that Umayyad persecutions of the *Ḳadarite* heresy were due to a recognition of its Persian connections combined with its possible justification of too independent thought and activity? Both were a menace to the state. The *Ḳadarite* movement eventually gave birth to the Muṭʿazilite, so warmly espoused by the Abbasids Al-Ma'mūn and Wāṭḥik, both of whom had Persian leanings, and Persian Shi'ite doctrine to the present contains many Muṭʿazilite elements. A saying attributed to Mohammed, but which, as Professor Macdonald points out, must be later than the rise of the *Ḳadariya*, says: "The *Ḳadarites* are the Mājūs [Zoroastrians] of the people" (*Encyclopedia of Islam*, art. "Ḳadariya").

Coming from a Persian background, it does not appear improbable that Wāḥb and Ḥasan had consciously or unconsciously stressed those aspects of Mohammed's teachings which were most congenial to the Zoroastrian thought of their time. Their mystical personal piety doubtless played a part, too, and it is surely not a coincidence that Persia has ever been a congenial home for Ṣūfī doctrine and practice. At any rate, Ḥasan's tractate and the *Ḳadar* passages in the *Tiḡān* should be studied from the viewpoint of possible Zoroastrian influence. Certainly, one must take into account *all* the systems of thought which were current in the atmosphere in which Muslim theology developed.

It has usually been assumed that contacts with the teachings of John of Damascus are responsible in large measure for the *Ḳadarite* heresy. This Byzantine theologian, who died sometime before 754, was born at the end of the seventh century, just at the time when Ma'ḥād suffered martyrdom, Ḥasan was being questioned as to his teachings on *Ḳadar*, and Wāḥb retracted his writings on the same subject. Hence the movement is earlier than the active years of John. It has been noted that a modern Muslim critic of Wensinck's *Muslim Creed*, which presents the view of the influence of Greek theology on Muslim, suggests rather that John was influenced by Islam (see *AJSL*, LIV [1937], 51, n. 129).

Is it too daring to suggest that Zoroastrian teachings on free will, directly or more probably indirectly, brought about the *Ḳadarite* heresy, which in turn colored in some degree the thinking of John and was finally mediated to Christian scholasticism through the twelfth-century Latin translation of his *De orthodoxa fide*, which is known to have influenced Peter the Lombard and Thomas Aquinas? The subject merits investigation by someone familiar with Zoroastrian, Muslim, and Christian thought. The problem of the possible influence of Persian teachings on Mohammed is more remote but also pertinent.

NOTE 138. J. Ruska draws attention to the evidence furnished by Al-Rāzī's *Kitāb al-Shawāhid* (not yet published) that *ca.* A.D. 900 the legends of Khālīd's

alchemical studies were already established. Ruska is still very emphatic in his opinion that the Khālid tradition is baseless and holds that there can have been no scientific activity before the time of the early Abbasids. Further, he asserts that the translations of medical and astronomical texts must have preceded the alchemical ("Alchemy in Islam," *Islamic Culture*, XI [1937], 32 and 36). It is my belief that we now have evidence of beginnings, during the Umayyad period, in both of these sciences, as well as in alchemy.

Manuscripts are still extant of Avicenna's Persian translation of an ode on the preservation of health by Tayādhūḵ (d. ca. A.H. 90), court physician to Al-Ḥajjāj. He is also credited with a large work on the preparations of medicines (Ibn abī Uṣaibī'a, I, 121; Ibn al-Ḳiftī, p. 105; *Fihrist*, p. 303; *Catalogue of the Arabic and Persian Manuscripts in the Oriental Public Library at Bankipore* [Calcutta, 1910], IV, 165, No. 108, iii).

H. E. Stapelton and M. Meyerhof have recently brought to light information which suggests far greater scientific activity in the Umayyad period than was supposed at the time my former article was written. Stapelton, in a letter to the editor of *Isis*, gives a preliminary report of his investigation of the alchemical manuscripts in the libraries of India. His findings are most significant for the genuineness of the Khālid tradition and the relations of the studies of Jābir and Ja'far al-Šādiḵ to those of the Umayyad prince. Khālid was born A.D. 672, and, from a fifteen-line extract of a poem, apparently addressed by him to his cousin Yazīd II, at or after the time of the latter's accession, it is certain that he survived at least until A.D. 720 and lived in Damascus. In it he claims to have succeeded in the practice of alchemy. A manuscript in the Aṣāfiyah library in Hyderabad makes it clear that he acquired some of his knowledge from the monk Mariyānos, from whom Jābir's learning was derived through two intermediaries. Stapelton is now convinced that the alchemical treatises in the Rampur Library, with which he and Azo dealt years ago, are probably authentic and not forgeries as has long been supposed (see "Further Notes on the Arabic Alchemical Manuscripts in the Libraries of India," *Isis*, XXVI [1936], 127-31, and "Note on the Arabic Manuscripts in the Aṣāfiyah Library, Hyderabad," *Archeion*, XIV, 57-61, where he lists manuscripts of two or three treatises by Khālid). Stapelton suggests that the contents of these Indian manuscripts will clear up details on the transference of alchemical knowledge current in pre-Islamic times in Alexandria and northern Mesopotamia to the Arabs through Khālid and Jābir. The statement (*AJSL*, LIV [1937], 55) on the date of Khālid's death must be corrected in the light of these findings, which also make more probable the tradition of his literary and scientific activities at Damascus under 'Umar II (*ibid.*, quoted from *Encyclopedia of Islam*, art. "Kitāb-khāna," p. 1045). Information on the Arabic source of this Khālid tradition would be appreciated.

Meyerhof offers very suggestive evidence for one path by which the learning of Alexandria, especially on the medical side, reached the Moslem world.

It becomes increasingly clear that the Umayyad rulers played a considerable role in the beginnings of Arabic scientific interests and the translation of Greek words. Al-Masʿūdī (d. A.D. 956, *Tamhīh*, p. 122) states that the ancient center of philosophical teaching was transferred, in the days of ʿUmar II, from Alexandria to Antioch and from there to Harrān in the time of Mutawakkil. A quotation from the autobiography of Al-Fārābī (d. A.D. 950) preserved by Ibn abī Uṣaibʿa (II, 135) agrees with this. According to both statements, the school at Antioch finally dwindled down to one teacher and two pupils before it was moved to Harrān. Ibn abī Uṣaibʿa (I, 116 f.) also gives a brief sketch of a Christian physician, Ibn Abjar, who as the confidant of ʿUmar II accepted Islam at the caliph's hand. He was the head of the Alexandrian school which ʿUmar moved to Antioch and which later went to Harrān. Finally, Meyerhof found confirmation for these statements in the unique Cairo manuscript of the *Useful Book in Medicine*, by ʿAlī ibn Riḍwān (d. after A.D. 1067), who repeatedly insists that the last Byzantine emperors persecuted the philosophers of Egypt and neglected the sciences, whereas several of the caliphs, particularly ʿUmar II, Hārūn al-Rashīd, and Al-Maʾmūn, were great patrons of every kind of scientific activity. Ignoring the anti-Christian touch, it is noteworthy that Ibn Riḍwān brackets the name of the Umayyad caliph with those of the two foremost patrons of Greek science among the Abbasids.

None of these Arabic sources explains why the school was removed from its ancient center to Syria, but Meyerhof suggests that it is "possible that the rapid decay of Alexandria cut off from Mediterranean commerce after the Arab occupation prevented the purchase of indispensable Greek manuscripts while Antioch had during the intervals between the long Byzantine-Arabic wars, intercourse and commerce with the Byzantine Empire" ("Transmission of Science to the Arabs," *Islamic Culture*, January, 1937, pp. 19-21). He does not believe that such a school was of an official character, for both orthodox Christians and Moslems distrusted Hellenic science. It would be interesting to know something of the activity of the scholars at Antioch during Umayyad times, but, to judge from the later interests of both pagan and Nestorian Christian scholars at Harrān, it seems likely that the study of Greek texts continued. Whether there was also a beginning of translations into Syriac and Arabic is not stated.

Al-Fārābī's report carries the scientific tradition from Harrān on to Baghdad. This scientist, who Al-Masʿūdī says was the heir of the scientific learning of this school, makes a point of the continuity of the scholarly tradition at Alexandria from Greek through Roman and Christian times to the days of Islam and states that the basis of instruction consisted of copies of Aristotle's works made from still earlier manuscripts dating from the very days of the philosopher himself. Hence, when he speaks of the last three members of the school leaving Antioch taking *the books* with them, it appears that he wishes to stress the reliability of the texts transmitted by the school as well as the continuity of learning. Therefore, although Al-Fārābī does not say so ex-

plicitly, the inference seems to be that a quantity of books was carried to Antioch from Alexandria at the time the school was moved by ʿUmar II.

Are we not justified in seeing the schools at Antioch and Harrān as the connecting links between the Museon of Alexandria and the House of Wisdom (*Bait al-Hikma* or *Dār al-ʿIlm*) of Baghdad? (See my previous article in *AJSL*, Vol. LII [October, 1935, and January, 1936], where the relations between the Moslem scientific academies and the school of Alexandria are discussed.)

None of these four reports collected by Meyerhof appears to use the term "House of Wisdom," but we have one hint that it was known in Umayyad times. Wahb ibn Munabbih, who, as we have seen, wrote under Umayyad patronage, in the *Tijān* says that, when King Solomon was on his way to visit Bilkīs the first time, her governor at Najrān—one of the wisest men of the day—assembled the people in the *Dār al-ʿIlm* to try the reputed wisdom of the Hebrew king. Where did Wahb get the idea of an "Abode of Learning" as a place of assembly for the discussions of wise men? (Ibn Hishām, *Kitāb al-Tijān* [Hyderabad, 1347/1928], p. 154; *Islamic Culture*, April, 1928, p. 83.)

NOTE 145. Ruska (*Islamic Culture*, January, 1937, pp. 35 f.), notes that the Rāzī manuscript is evidence that Stephanos appears as Khālid's instructor in the older version of the legend, but that both the Stephanos and the Marianos forms were known in the tenth century.

NOTE 157. Meyerhof says Māsīrjīs was a Persian Jew, probably a pupil of the great school at Jundishāpūr. If correct, this raises the question of the possible influence and activities of this center of Sassanian-Hellenistic learning during the Umayyad period. A unique manuscript (Aya Sofya 4838) of the abridgment of his *Fī Abdāl al-Adwiya* ("On Substitutes for Remedies") is still extant (Meyerhof, *op. cit.*, p. 22).

NOTE 162. Professor H. G. Farmer writes me that the Ambrosian manuscript (C. 86. 1) of the *ʿArḍ Miftāḥ* of Hermes states that it was translated into Arabic *Dhwl-Kaḍa*, A.H. 125/September 743.

NOTE 165. A unique manuscript of a work by the geographer Ibn al-Fakīh, photographed by E. E. Herzfeld in the library of the Meshhed shrine (fol. 94b) quotes a very reliable early historian, Hishām ibn al-Kalbī (819 A.D.), as saying that he copied the entire introduction of a book which had been confiscated from the luggage of the Sassanian princess Behāfrid and translated for the governor Al-Ḥajjāj. The introduction also states that the work was composed for Kavāt (about A.D. 500), and, judging from the citations in the Meshhed manuscript, it contained a collection of all sorts of strange information on the various districts of Iran, including a characterization of the climate and inhabitants of each. Professor Herzfeld draws attention to a Pahlavi pamphlet dealing with the towns of Iran entitled *Shahrīhā ē Ērān*, and the fact that the source for the chapter "On the Nature of the Mountains" in the *Bundahishn* is given as the *Ayātkārihā ē Shahrihā*. Various historical remarks suggest that it was written during the reign of Kavāt. Herzfeld is convinced

that the corresponding chapters on rivers, lakes, and seas must have been derived from the same source, however much they may have been altered. He concludes that both the pamphlet on the towns and the quotations in the *Bundahishn* are fragments of the original "Baedeker" which the princess carried on her travels. It is to be hoped that the Ibn al-Faḳīh manuscript will soon be published (E. E. Herzfeld, *Archeological History of Iran* [London, 1935], pp. 105 f.; the text of the Pahlavi work has been published with an English translation by J. Markwart, *A Catalogue of the Provincial Capitals of Eranshahr*, ed. G. Messina [Rome, 1931]).

In "A New Pahlavi Inscription," *AJSL*, LIII (January, 1937), 126-44, Professor M. Sprengling presented a preliminary publication of a Pahlavi inscription found by the Oriental Institute Expedition on the Kaaba of Zoroaster in 1936. This portion of a *notitia dignitatum* of the Sassanid empire he dated to the early years of Narseh, but now, according to a private conversation, he is convinced it is from the reign of Shahpuhr I and is an earlier example of the same type of literature as the *Shahrihā ē Ērān*. The usefulness of such a catalogue to Al-Ḥajjāj as governor of the Eastern Provinces is obvious.

Princess Behāfrīd's book adds another bit of evidence for the preservation of books taken as loot in the early days of Muslim conquest and belies the implication, in the famous words imputed to Umar I, that the Arabs destroyed all books that fell into their hands.

Far more significant, the translation of it for Al-Ḥajjāj suggests that Arabic geographical literature grew out of the administrative needs of the Umayyad government. It has been seen above, note 130, that even the *Ḳadar* controversy was not merely the academic discussion of theologians, detached from practical affairs, but had far-reaching political implications and cannot be properly understood unless it is related to the social process. See my article (*AJSL*, LIV [October, 1937], 58) for a brief discussion of the practical considerations which first stimulated an interest in various intellectual pursuits which in turn resulted in the development of several departments of Arabic prose literature.

According to T. W. Arnold (*Painting in Islam* [Oxford, 1928], p. 63), the geographer Abū Ishāq al-Iṣṭakhri (middle of the tenth century) describes a manuscript on the history of the Persian kings which he saw in a castle in northern Persia, containing pictures of the Sassanian kings, which seems to have resembled the manuscript seen by Al-Mas'ūdī about the same time at Iṣṭakhr and which he said was taken as loot in A.H. 113 and translated into Arabic for Hishām ibn 'Abd al-Malik. Al-Mas'ūdī describes the miniatures in some detail (*Tanbīh*, pp. 106 ff.; see *AJSL*, LIII [July, 1937], 250). One wonders whether the pictures were of more than passing interest to the Umayyad caliphs and whether Persian painting exercised any influence in the Moslem world before the time of the Abbasids. The murals at Ḳuṣair 'Amra and the mosaics in the mosque at Damascus indicate that the Umayyad

princes were not a little charmed by representational art (Alois Musil, *Ḳuṣajr ʿAmra* [Wien, 1907], Band II, plates; Eustache de Lorey et M. van Berchem, *Les Mosaïques de la mosquée des Omayyades à Damas* [Paris, 1930]).

NOTE 170. It becomes increasingly apparent that a re-estimate of the Umayyad period is imperative for a proper understanding of the cultural history of Islam. Such a study must utilize the rapidly accumulating archeological evidence for the architecture of the period, any scraps of information dealing with the intellectual and social life of the time, and, above all, necessitates a critical re-examination of the historical records. The publication undertaken by the School of Oriental Studies of the Hebrew University of Balādhurī's *Ansāb al-ashrāf wa akhbārāhum*, hitherto inaccessible to most scholars, will furnish new material and a valuable check on the more biased accounts (Vol. V, ed. S. D. F. Goitein [Jerusalem, 1936]; see the review by G. Sarton, *Isis*, XXVI [1936-37], 457 f.). The work of Balādhurī (d. A.D. 892), although produced under Abbasid patronage, exhibits a surprising degree of objectivity in the treatment of the deposed dynasty. This is probably due in part to the debt of Balādhurī, for his history of the caliphs, to Al-Madā'inī (d. A.D. 840), much of whose information according to Yaḳūt (VI, 94, l. 8) was drawn from ʿAwāna (d. A.D. 764-65), who wrote in the interests of the Umayyads (Goitein, *op. cit.*, Preface, pp. 15 f.).

These notes and the article to which they are supplementary are intended to draw attention to rather than to solve some of the problems of the intellectual history of the Umayyad period which need thorough investigation. It is probable that we shall soon be in a position to realize that the dark age between the downfall of the Sassanids and the establishment of the Persianized Abbasids at Baghdad had been exaggerated. In the first place, the Arab conquest should not be viewed as the eruption of hordes of uncultivated savages, for the Arabs of the "Days of Ignorance" were possessed of a culture of their own, however much its values differed from those of the settled man, and Arabia was in far closer touch with the movements of civilization than has often been supposed. Second, the more truly Arab Umayyads played a considerable role in the making of Islamic civilization—that strange distillation of ancient Greek and oriental cultures to which the Arabs contributed much more than simply a book and a language. A knowledge of the nature of that civilization is an essential part in the task of understanding our own complex heritage, for the debt of the Western world to the medieval Near East is only recently coming to be appreciated. (For a general survey of Umayyad history see P. K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs* [London, 1937], chaps. xvii-xxii; on the intellectual and artistic interests see chap. xxi and Brockelmann, *op. cit.*, Suppl. I, pp. 76-106.)

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